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APRIL 1993 ISSUE 33

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NEC Duo-R
Virtual Cushion
Sega Activator

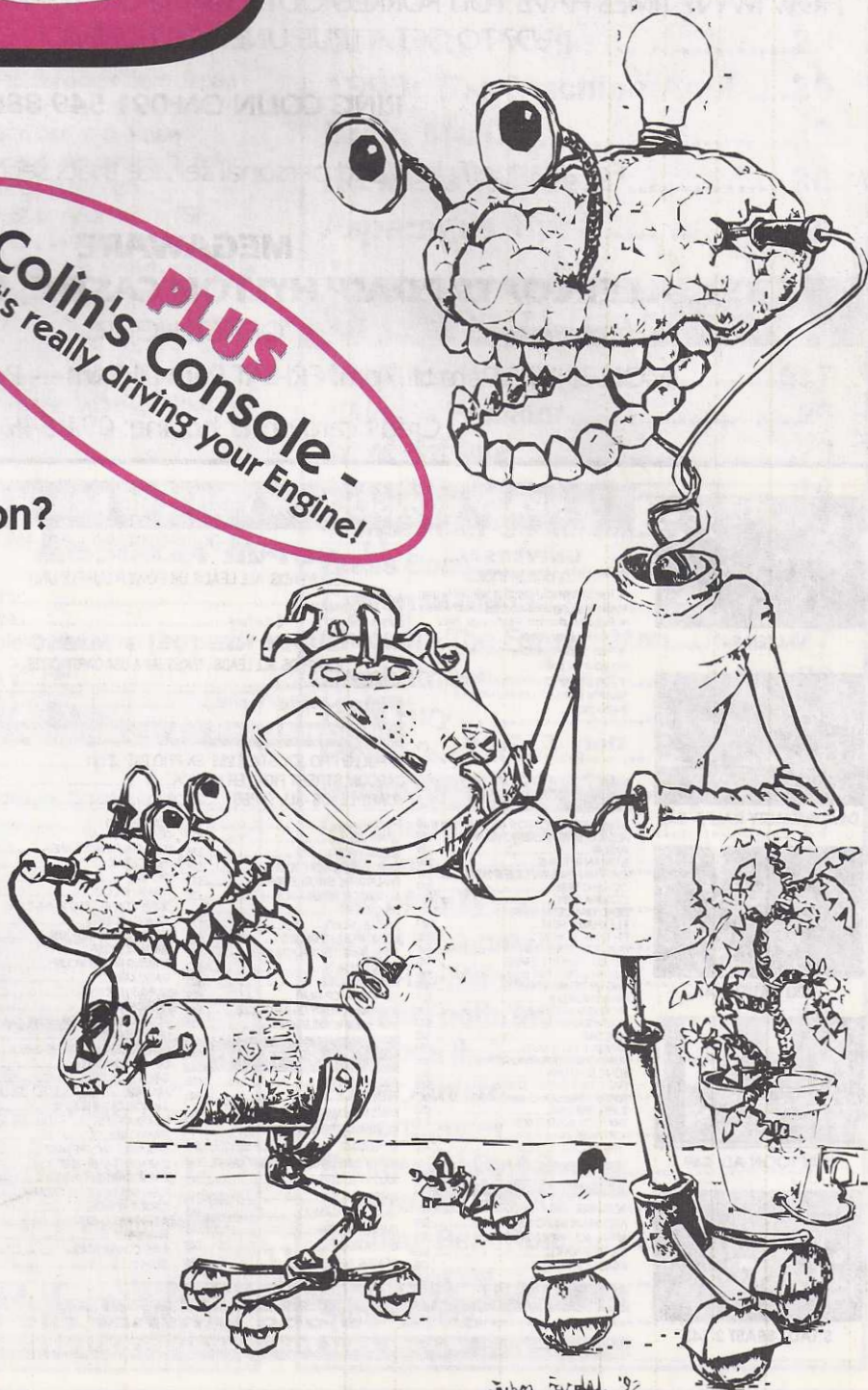
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The Joy of Sticks
1993: The Machine Age

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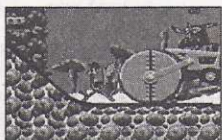
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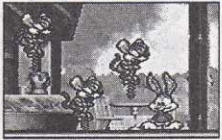
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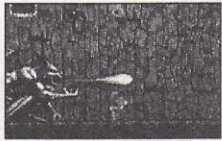
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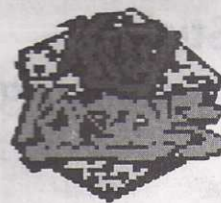
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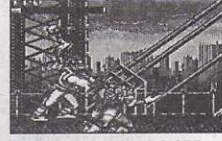
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EDITOR'S BIT

Welcome to the first nationally distributed issue of Electric Brain — especially to all new readers. EB is the best video game console fanzine in the world (probably!), not to mention that it's the only multi-format console paper in the UK.



This fanzine is dedicated to the real games player who wants the latest news on video games, the top game cheats, HONEST personal game reviews — in fact everything console related: anime videos, game music, coin-ops, gadgets and add-ons of every kind.

We WON'T be giving you expensive "FREE" gifts that you don't want (bumping up the price in the process) or ridiculous reports of up and coming items that are based on nothing more than whispered rumours in the men's toilets. And there'll be no ugly mugs modelling T-Shirts.

Electric Brain deals mainly with the popular games consoles from Japan (apart from the Lynx, which is American), although we cover all keyboard-less games machines as and when they appear. As most of the new games and accessories appear from across the oceans, we generally refer to the machines by their original names. So the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES) is referred to as the Super Famicom (SF). It's also less confusing when talking about things like the 8-bit NES.

Although most of you will own "official" UK machines, the British scene is well behind that of Japan and the US... so EB will deal mainly with the import scene. But we'll also keep you updated about what will be available on the official British formats each month.

As EB is a FANZINE, we want you to contribute too, to make it better than other commercial video game "all-colour-multi-page-we've-got-tons-of-dosh-to-throw-around-so-there" publications. Let us know what you think — we'd sure like to hear from you.

Remember... a fanzine is produced by the fans — and that's you!

Well, enough of me rattling on... I'll leave you to read the rest of this edition while I pop off to prepare some bits and bobs for the new extension to my Blue Peter Tracy Island.

Onn Lee

PS. Electric Brain is also the longest running console 'zine in the UK, possibly the world, spanning four years. So you can rely on us!!

THE BRAINS BEHIND ELECTRIC BRAIN

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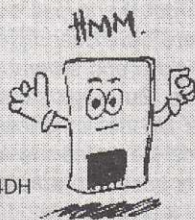
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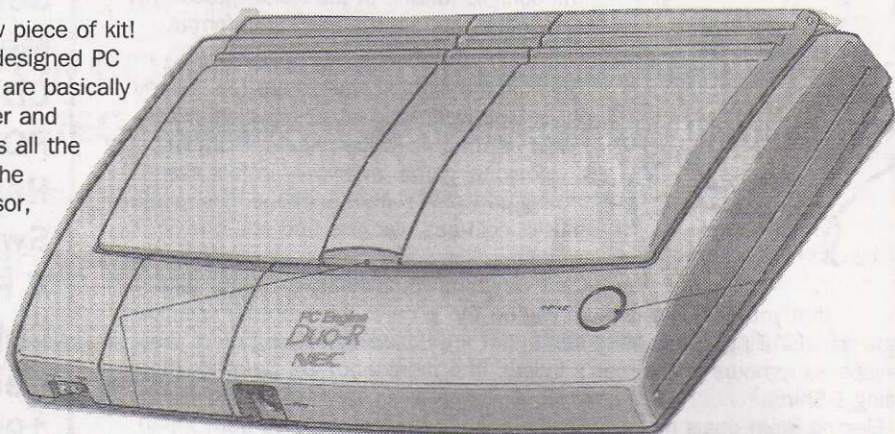
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NEC NEW DUO-R

Well, what a surprise! NEC are to release a new piece of kit! In fact it's not really that new at all, being a redesigned PC Engine DUO — called the DUO-R. The changes are basically cosmetic; the new machine's casing is smoother and sleeker (the "R" is said to stand for "Round", as all the corners have been rounded off). And although the DUO-R is actually a bit larger than its predecessor, we suspect that the internals have been scaled down to cut costs. In fact the system will be about 20,000 Japanese yen cheaper at around ¥39,800 (that's approx £240 at the time of going to press — watch the exchange rates for more dramatic changes). That's certainly great value for money for a console with built-in CD-Rom. Available in Japan any day now.

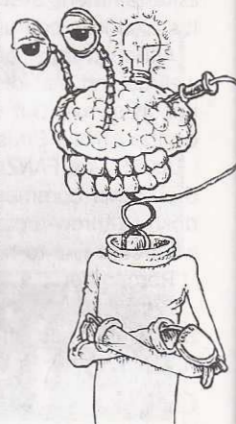
Still on the subject of the DUO: a karaoke add-on was demonstrated at this year's Consumer Electronics Show in America. This in itself is not new to the PC Engine, as NEC have already produced an amp for the machine which includes karaoke.



LASER ACTIVE UPDATE

Last issue we reported news of Pioneer's Laser Active Laser Disk machine, which can not only play full size video laser disks and standard CDs but (with optional adapters) can also play Mega Drive cartridges and CDs, PC Engine cards and CDs, as well as LD-Roms. Add a Karaoke adapter and you can sing to your heart's content!

But when will it be available and what will it cost? Well... the latest news is that all the units will be out in July. The main system (CLD-A100) will cost around ¥90,000, that's a cool £400. The Mega Drive and PC Engine adapters will set you back a further ¥60,000 (about £270 each), while the Karaoke adapter will cost ¥20,000 (£100 approx)!! So not many people will be getting one of these, that's for sure. In fact it would cost about the same to buy each of the systems separately, although you wouldn't get the LD-Rom. An LD-Rom is similar to a CD-Rom, which can hold 540 megabytes of data. But as the LD-Rom laser disk is larger, it can hold 60 minutes of audio and video too!



MEGA-CD COMING SOON — OFFICIAL!

With the US going crazy over the recent release of the Sega-CD system for the Genesis (American version of the Mega Drive), it's expected that Sega will soon release the official system in the UK. The CD unit will be bundled with a six-in-one game pack, featuring five previous cartridge titles (Golden Axe, Streets of Rage, Columns, Super Shinobi and Super Monaco GP) as well as Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective.

As our man David Simmonds has just got himself a US Sega-CD (after fighting off large numbers of Yanks to get it), check out next month's EB for his views on the system and all the software. As the UK version is likely to be very similar, he'll be able to tell you exactly what to expect!

EVEN MORE ACTIVE

Every so often someone comes up with a totally strange control device intended to put the joypad out of commission. There have been light guns, the mouse, the glove and several strange head-gear devices. But Sega stole this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago with a device called the Activator.

The Activator is based on an eight-piece, octagonal interlocking module. You connect it to your Mega Drive, stand in the middle of this octagonal shape and control the action by moving your body! The system uses light beams from the eight sections to detect your movements; this information is transferred to a character (or whatever) on screen, which can then precisely mimic your actions. At the CES, the system was demonstrated with the game Streets of Rage 2; by jumping,

punching, etc., you could get the characters on screen to perform the same moves!

It's expected that the Activator will be available in the US in the autumn (or should that be the fall?) at around \$75, bundled with a game cartridge containing two games that are specially written to use it.

Although the system won't suit every game on the market, it sure is a neat idea — and one that will keep you fit as well.



SEGA'S ACTIVATOR - THIS GUY SHOWS HE SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE US OLYMPIC HIGH JUMP TEAM!

GOOD, GOOD VIBRATIONS

Well, you've heard of VR and CV. Now NEC have released VC. What is it and what does it do?

Our man in the electric chair is Onn Lee.

VC (sounds rather awful, doesn't it?) stands for Virtual Cushion. The best description I suppose is that it's either a poor man's Vibrator Seat (that's a VS to those in the know) or a massager!!

For your £50 (or in this case MY £50), you get a blow-up plastic thingy resembling a miniature tubed airbed (see Argos catalogue, page 65, number 20 — or 21 without the bits). It has a phono socket on the outside, a vibrator unit inside, a zipped jacket cover, a small black box with dials and sockets, a couple of cables and a 9V power supply (Japanese of course).



ALL THE BITS AND BOBS CONNECTED TO YOUR DUO HERE!

To set up your VC, you blow up the air-cushion thingy and place it inside the zipped cover. Then you hook it all up to your machine. As the cushion works on sound, it doesn't just connect to NEC's PC Engine/DUO, but can also be linked to all other games consoles — plus computers and other music systems like a Walkman, Diskman, radio, hi-fi or TV.

The small black unit is really a mini amplifier, powered by the 9V adapter. It has four sockets on one side: one is a sound connection to the cushion, two are line-in stereo phono sockets where you connect your sound source (PC Engine, Super Famicom, etc.) and the fourth is a 3.5mm stereo socket for an additional sound output; you can link this to a pair of headphones or to an amp/big speakers. As you can see, when connected it's wires everywhere!

So far so good? Then get ready to vibrate.

Place the cushion on the back of a chair (a solid, rigid one is best — standard office chairs aren't too hot as their backs rattle!), plug in a game, turn on and away you go.

The cushion will vibrate with loud bass sounds, especially with drum beats, strange synths, explosions, loud thuds and so forth. You can vary the vibrations by adjusting two dials on the small amp. One is the vibration volume, the other is labelled "Effector"; this varies the width of sound frequency for vibration. With low vibration volume, the feeling is like stand-

ing in front of some big speakers — you can't feel much on your back. But on higher volume, it's like a juggernaut has just rolled past your house. The lower the setting of the Effector, the smaller the range of sounds that are picked up for vibration; conversely, the higher the Effector setting, the larger the range.

The amp also has a volume control for the 3.5mm socket, useful when wearing headphones.

So what's it like?

On Street Fighter II it's great.

Because the game has some brilliant music, it really sends lots of vibrations to your back — especially on E Honda's stage, where the effect increases and decreases dramatically.

Punches, kicks, and — best of all — when you or your opponent hit the ground also send out thudding vibrations.

As you might expect, the VC is best used with shoot 'em ups — CD games are even better. Gadius II and Darius on CD for the PC Engine are both fabulous. In fact any game with lots going on, like Assault Suit Valken/Cybernator on the SF, really makes your back work!!

Overall, the Virtual Cushion doesn't really enhance gameplay or make a game more enjoyable. Nor does it create the feeling of "being there" as with coin-op vibrator seats like Astron Belt. Because the cushion responds to a wide frequency, a game with heavy, bassy background music has it vibrating most of the time. And as yet no games have been produced specifically to make best use of the cushion's features, although it's hoped that NEC Avenue's forthcoming Super Darius II on Super CD will do so. In particular the cushion should vibrate more when you are hit — and at a maximum when you die.

However I do think the Virtual Cushion is quite extraordinary. Since I've had one I've been using it on everything — all games, including those on Gameboy! It's such a strange effect and, although not an essential product, quite fun. It's also good to your back.



PLAY ALL GAMES WITH THE V.C. AND GET REAL VIBRATED

BARCODE BATTLERS?

Every other magazine in existence has been going on about the Barcode Battler, as well as the Gameboy version by Namco coming out soon (not to mention a Super Famicom adapter). But do they know what it's all about? Not really!

Well... EB for one will definitely NOT be covering the Barcode systems as they are very boring! The machines have been available in Japan for a few years now. You might have read that they're extremely popular over there and that thousands of gamers have been packing supermarkets to get certain goods (like noodles) for high scoring barcodes — this is not exactly true! In Japan Barcode Battlers are really about as popular as those mini handheld LCD games you can buy from toy shops... ie. not very popular at all. When the majority of Japanese gamers already own a Famicom (Japanese 8-bit NES), why should they want a naff Barcode Battler?

As you might have seen, the Barcode Battlers have LCD screens and only display numbers like a calculator or digital watch. They can't display flashy graphics or sound — well nothing more than a few bleeps.

The games themselves are basically RPGs or War titles. So when you are attacked by something (in theory), you have a set of numbers representing your health, power, etc. and so do the baddies. The idea is that you use barcodes taken from household products to determine the



amount of hit points you can inflict on your opponent — and behold you see the numbers changing! *Zzzzzzzzz!*

The Gameboy version should be a little better as it will come with a cartridge that displays graphics of players, enemies etc. But the gameplay will probably be much the same. As for the Super Famicom Barcode Battler adapter... why anyone would want to buy such an item when there are so many good RPGs for the machine is beyond me.

EB verdict: stay well clear of them!

SOFTWARE NEWS

Most news of new games comes from the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) that recently took place in Chicago — we couldn't list all the titles that were promised, so we've picked the most interesting. Also this month, more news of what we can look forward to from Japan.

Asmik

Owners of the Mega Drive will have played Asmik's 3D aircraft game called *Air Diver* some years ago. Now the game is coming to your Super Famicom under the title of *Super Air Diver* (very original as always!). Although the MD game wasn't anything to write home about, this SF game looks to be a winner — especially as it will feature the famous DSP chip, so you can expect 3D as good as *Pilot Wings*. More news on this when we have more info.

Capcom

After the huge success of *Street Fighter II*, Capcom have been rather quiet. But they do have a number of new titles waiting in the wings. These include *Aladdin*, based on the recent animated Disney movie of the boy with the magic lamp. It's expected to be another *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* style arcade adventure and should be available late in the year.

And look out for *Final Fight II*, the sequel to to top arcade adventure beat 'em up. This version for the SF will definitely incorporate a two player option. Rumour has it that Chun Li of SFII fame will also make an appearance in the backdrop of one of the levels.

Capcom are also working on *Super Mega Man*. After five games on the 8-bit machine and three on the Gameboy, *Mega Man (Rockman)* will be coming to your SF around the autumn.



MEGAMAN COMING TO YOUR SUPER FAMILICOM SOON

Acclaim

The main game from Acclaim will be the conversion of Williams/Bally's beat 'em up, *Mortal Combat*. The game is rapidly becoming as popular as *Street Fighter II* — especially as it features totally amazing digitised action moves (which are also difficult to perform). It should be a real winner if Acclaim can do the biz as they did with *Smash TV*. Meanwhile we would like to see Acclaim convert some of Williams/Bally's Pintables to the consoles — they would surely make a packet if they did!



ONE OF THE FIGHTERS IN MORTAL COMBAT - LIU KANG

Another Acclaim title coming soon is *Terminator 2: The Arcade Game*, which can be used with the Super Scope.

Data East

More Neo Geo conversions come from Data East. Right now they're busy programming *Sengoku* (the rather strange Heaven, Earth and Hell beat 'em up adventure) for the SF. They also have *Shadow Run* (a 3D isometric RPG) and *Ultrabots*, a 3D first person perspective *Battletech* war strategy action game.

Activision

After the terrible *Aliens Vs Predator*, Activision are set to release *MechWarrior*, a strategy game with 3D action. You design and make yourself a *MechWarrior* before setting out to take on the other mechanical beasts. We hope to have a full review of this game in the next issue of EB.



ACTIVISION'S MECH-WARRIOR - CHECK OUT NEXT ISSUE FOR FULL REVIEW

American Softworks

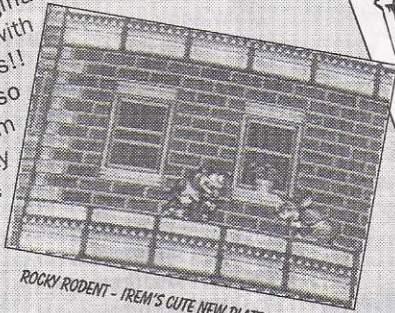
After the average *Skuljagger*, AS are to release *Super James Pond* for the SF. Although the title suggests it's based on the original game, it is in fact a conversion of the sequel — *Robocod*, the great platform adventure. The gameplay will remain the same as the MD version, but the graphics and sound will be even better!

Electronic Arts

Following the conversion of nearly every other EA game from the Mega Drive to the Super Famicom, it's very likely that *Road Rash* will be next in line. One thing that should improve on the SF will be the 3D scrolling. Coming a lot sooner, however, will be an action platform adventure called the *Adventures of Bob*. Here you control an alien (that looks like a robot), who has crash landed on an alien planet and must try to find his way home. Lots of platforms to negotiate, lots of other aliens to blast, lots of powerups to pick up, etc. We had hoped our non-resident future correspondent, JB, would give us a full preview. But it didn't arrive in time! So check out your next issue of EB. Meanwhile if we get our hands on a full version of the game before then, we'll give you a full review.

Irem

Irem US will soon be releasing a game called Street Combat; we would advise everyone NOT to buy this as it's basically the original Ramma Ω game but with different graphics!! However, Irem also have a cute platform game called Rocky Rodent in the works. As you can guess from the title, you control a mouse equipped with a rocket pack!



ROCKY RODENT - IREM'S CUTE NEW PLATFORM GAME!



Namco

Namco's next game for the SF will be Super Wagonland 2. Considering the first game was totally unplayable (due to the mass of Japanese text!), let's hope the sequel is more action packed. The game has you controlling a green, frog-like robot in an arcade action platform adventure.

Other Namco games in production include Battle Cars — a sort of F-Zero game with a touch more violence — and Metal Marines, a war game played on a 3D isometric map.



NAMCO'S F-ZERO-LIKE BATTLE CARS

Lucas Arts

After the success of Super Star Wars... yep, you've guessed it: the sequel will be Super Empire Strikes Back. It's currently in production and will be available in the summer. As with the first game, it will follow the film closely — from starting on the ice planet with AT-AT Walkers and Snow Speeders, to finding Yoda, dodging those bounty hunters and the arrival and goings on at Cloud City. Like Star Wars, the game will feature a mixture of arcade platform action (plan view and side view shoot 'em ups), together with mode 7 flying bits! Plus the usual great graphics and sound.

Following the well impressive Star Fox, the first game to use the Super FX chip (check out the full review in next month's EB), Nintendo are set to bring you Vega Stakes, a gambling game. Well... we see a lot of people rushing out to get this!!

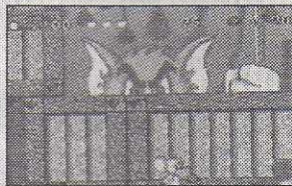
Nintendo

Ocean

As well as their second Addams Family game, Ocean are set to release Radio Flyer and The Untouchables, the latter probably being a scope shoot 'em up.

Hi-Tech

Amazingly, Hi-Tech are to release Barbie Fashion for the SNES. Considering the NES version was put down by everyone, their reasons for bothering to make a version for the 16-bit are beyond us. We'll check out how bad it really is when we get our mits on it.



HI-TECH'S TOM AND JERRY... CLASSIC CARTOON SOON ON THE SUPER FAMICOM

Also from Hi-Tech comes news of Harley's Humongous Adventure (a rather LARGE platform game) and Tom and Jerry. Full reviews in EB soon.

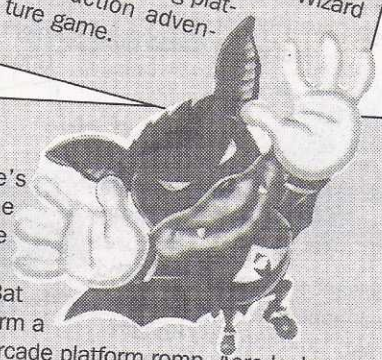
Seta

When you read this, Seta's Exhaust Heat II should be available. Seta also have The Wizard of Oz, a scrolling platform action adventure game.

Sunsoft

Although Accolade's Bubsy was one of the main video characters at the CES, Sunsoft's Aero was also a big hit. Aero is a Super Hero Bat (Acrobat in fact), who can perform a number of stunts in his mega arcade platform romp. Aero looks great — watch out for a full review soon.

Sunsoft also have Tazmania for the SF, as well as Daffy Duck and Marvin the Martman in a great looking platform shoot 'em up.



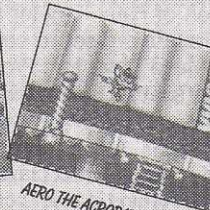
Hudson Soft

As expected with the launch of the four player adapter, Super Bomberman will soon be exploding on to your Super Famicom. The game is based on the recently released Bomberman '93 for the PC Engine (reviewed this issue). While the Engine version enables five people to compete at the same time, Super Bomberman will only allow four, although extra computer-controlled Bombermen can be added! The SF game will also include extra weapon icons, like speed boots and a punch icon. And to top it all, some mazes in the new game will also include starting off in the middle of the maze! We'll keep you posted on when this game is likely to be released.

Hudson are also preparing a number of sports games for the SF: Power League Baseball and Power Golf are currently in the works.



SUNSOFT'S TAZMANIA 3D ACTION



AERO THE ACROBAT... MORE PLATFORM ACTION



SUNSOFT'S DAFFY DUCK GAME... PLATFORM SHOOT 'EM UP ACTION

MEGA DRIVE NEWS

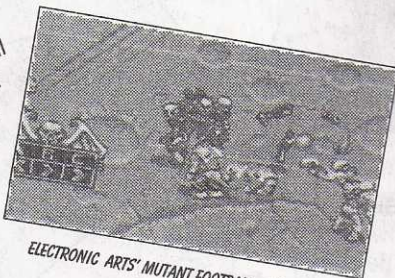
Absolute

Tennis games on the Mega Drive haven't been too stunning, but Absolute are hoping to change this with Amazing Tennis. It is of course a conversion of the SF game and likely to be very similar.

Electronic Arts

What can you expect from

EA? Next on the line will be a violent American Football game called Blood & Guts Football, Jungle Strike (the follow up to the popular Desert Strike



ELECTRONIC ARTS' MUTANT FOOTBALL... A LOT MORE ROUGH STUFF!

expected around June), RPG conversions of Black Crypt and Might and Magic 3, Zombie High and, following on from the PC Engine version, It Came to the Desert is also set to make it to the MD.

Psygnosis

As licence owners of Bram Stoker's Dracula, Psygnosis are working on a wicked game based on the movie for Mega-CD. The new game uses amazing digitised pictures from the film with terrific digitised sprites — there's even some full motion video thrown in for good measure. On first sight very impressive but, considering most Psygnosis games are more about looks and sound than actual playability, let's hope that Dracula lives up to its blood-quenching promise.

Kaneko

After producing Chester Cheetah for the Super Famicom, Kaneko are set to convert it for the Mega Drive too. Considering that the conversion of Power Athlete was identical, the MD Chester should be the same as the SF game.

Sega of America

If you own a Sega-CD, then Sega have some "Make My Video" CDs on offer, including INXS and Marky Mark & The Funky Bunch... excellent or what?

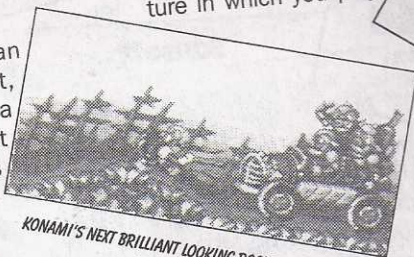
Sega US also have a number of other normal cartridge releases in the pipeline, including Dinosaurs For Hire, a platform action shoot 'em up based on the comic of the same name. Other new Sega titles include X-Men (based on Marvel's Mutants — this looks very good indeed, more like a Shinobi style game) and Cyborg Justice, a scrolling left to right robot beat 'em up, where you build up a robot, arm it up (with chain-saw, flame thrower, etc.) and set off to beat the enemy 'bots. It also features two player simultaneous action; check out the next edition of EB for a preview — or even review! Sega US are also set to bring you Jester, a strange cartoon puzzle platform game like Kid Chameleon.

Konami

After the two excellent Konami titles we reviewed last issue for the Mega Drive (Turtles and Sunset Riders), the team are to release an original game called Rocket Knight Adventure. The game is a cute Ghouls 'n' Ghost style action adventure in which you play



the part of an armoured rat, complete with a sword and rocket pack. It features brilliant animated sprites and will appear on cartridge format. Unfortunately Konami hasn't given a release date yet. But it looks mega!



KONAMI'S NEXT BRILLIANT LOOKING ROCKET RODENT FOR THE MEGA DRIVE.

Sony Imageworks

Strangely, Sony are to re-release Chunk Rock for the Sega-CD. The CD game looks very much the same as the MD original. So if you bought the game on cartridge... forget this

Takara

After the conversion of Fatal Fury for the Super Famicom, Takara are set to convert the game for the Mega Drive too. From the screen shots we've seen, it's very much like the Super Famicom game (see review in this issue), although you will also be able to play any of the characters in the two player mode. Another forthcoming conversion is King of the Monsters; this too looks very much like the SF game.



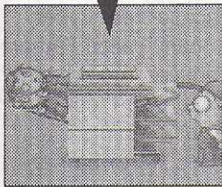
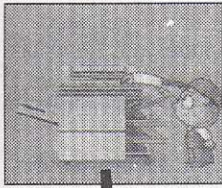
FATAL FURY ON THE MEGA DRIVE!

Tradewest

Battle Toads will be hitting the Mega Drive real soon in the US. The game will be a direct port (in terms of gameplay and levels) from the 8-bit NES version. But of course the graphics and sound will be vastly improved. I have to admit this is one of the best games on the NES, not to mention one of the hardest. Definitely a MUST BUY when it's released in the spring.

Sega of Japan

More news on the Final Fight CD: it should be available around now. It also turns out that the extra two player mode is not a one-on-one game as in Streets of Rage II; instead the two players are up against all the thugs (as in the normal game) but on new backdrops. The winner is the one who defeats the most opponents — this should be a lot more fun!



SEGA'S SWITCH CARTOON ON CD

Sega's Assault Suit Leynos/Cybernator style game — Transa Banker — will be available real soon, probably in May. As with all battle-suit type games, you can choose between absolutely masses of awesome weapons and there are hordes of enemies to blow up. Transa Banker also has a new twist in that it also features an Op. Wolf style shooter game within.

Although the Manchester Utd. football game has been converted to the Mega Drive as European Championship Soccer, Sega have also decided to produce their own soccer game for release at the end of April. J Lwague Pro Striker '93 is very much like Kick Off but with better graphics. An added touch is that Sega plan to incorporate a four player option — this will work with a four player adapter coming out soon! The game will be on 8meg cartridge, including battery back.

Finally, if you have a Mega-CD, look out for Sega's strange comic CD called Switch, which features over a thousand animated strips. It'll be out at the end of April.



FINAL FIGHT ON THE MEGA-CD. THE NEW TWO PLAYER OPTION... NOTE THE DIFFERENT BACKDROP. YOU HAVE TO CLOBBER MORE ENEMIES THAN YOUR MATE WITHIN THE TIME LIMIT!

Taito

Taito's conversion of their Night Striker coin-op game for the Mega-CD is looking really great — even if the 3D graphic action is rather chunky. Taito will be using the Mega-CD's speedy processor and graphic chip to make it as fast as possible. No release date for this as yet.

Another Taito Mega CD title, Ninja Warriors, will be out as you read this. But as the coin-op didn't feature anything special, it doesn't look as though it will be any different from other cartridge games — apart from the CD sound track and animated intros.

Meanwhile on cartridge, Taito will have the conversion of Hit the Ice coming real soon.

T*HQ

Oh yes... T*HQ are to set to bring Thomas the Tank Engine to the Mega Drive, although this "game" looks more educational.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

04/93

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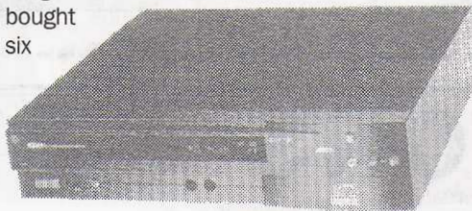
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PHILIPS CD-I: THE

First there was music. Then came the Compact Disc. But now there is CD-I — sound, vision and interaction. Nick Burne waved his pound notes at the salesman and said, "I'll take one of those please. And NO I don't want it on interest free credit — I've watched Watchdog!".

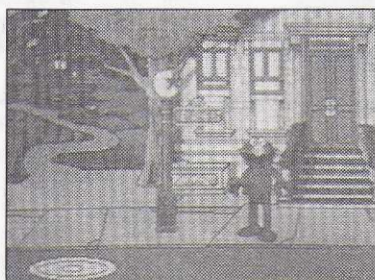
After I got burgled I thought I might as well spend some dosh, so I bought the Philips CD-I (they call me Flash Git!). As it cost about £500, I thought this has to be good. I bought six



THIS IS THE EARLY VERSION OF THE PHILIPS CD-I MACHINE

pieces of software with it which I have since reviewed (a couple here).

My CD-I came in a massive box and was extremely heavy. In the box was the



SESAME STREET: WHY DIDN'T NICK GET THIS?

CD-I unit itself, a "thumbstick controller", loads of leads and a promotional disc. So I got to work setting it up.

Half an hour later...

On the box appeared a menu screen with an open/close icon, memory, dim and setting icons. So I pumped up the

volume on my stereo and let it fly! The promo disc booted and an amazing orchestral music score started, with loads of digitised images starting to fly across the screen. After nearly fainting, I was confronted by a cartoon character doing a piece of graffiti. I decided to move the controller and the character turned around and wrote on the screen: "go on, press a button". I did this and was presented with another screen which said: "CD-I Player, Stereos, DCC products, Matchline products, Videos and other Audio/Visual products".

I clicked on only to discover that this was just a series of adverts for other electronic goodies.

So I put in my first interactive game disc and started playing...

Escape from Cyber City CD-I by Fathom Pictures

I saw an advertisement for Escape from Cyber City in Dixons and it was amazing! They had made an Anime film called Galaxy Express 999 into a game!

When you first start up this game (it's very quick to load) you are presented with the option of going on the Cyber City tour. This basically shows you some clips of the film. In fact at this point I was surprised to discover that the game was a shoot 'em up!

The game is very highly polished, in the style of Dragon's Lair on the arcade. The graphics are of brilliant laserdisc quality and the sound is amazing. "See this gun, kid? It can shoot the lips off a cockroach!" Awesome! But as the thumbstick is a highly sensitive control device, the game is b**** hard to play.

My favourite bit is this: three cops are

walking down a street and if you shoot one of them, they capture you. So what you do instead is shoot the fuel tanker behind them — it explodes, killing them in the process!!

This game looks like it will last me for ages, mainly because of the extremely high difficulty level. Escape from Cyber City is made by a company called Fathom Pictures, who also produced the amazing Palm Springs Open (read on). I look forward to playing some more Anime interactive games. Fist of The North Star, anyone?

Palm Springs Open CD-I by Fathom Pictures

Anyone for golf? This CD-I game is brilliant. Based on several courses around the world, it features full motion video, digitised graphics and sound.

The game starts off with a jaunty little tune and you are immediately presented with the option of playing a full 18 holes,

SCORE

Video	98%
Audio	88%
Playability	71%
Lastability	66%

79%

just the last 9 or the choice of practising any one of the 18 holes individually. You can have up to a maximum of four players, each identified by their different coloured shirts.

Next you are presented with a massive golfer and I thought: "It's going to be jerkier than Golden Fighter!" How wrong I was. After selecting a club, checking the wind and aiming, I took my first shot. The animation was the best I have seen anywhere — the golfer's swing was perfect and the ball flew into the distance beautifully.

The controls for Palm Springs Open are simple but effective and the game is enjoyable to play.

There is one let down, however. When

SCORE

Video	95%
Audio	97%
Playability	88%
Lastability	88%

92%

NEXT GENERATION?

you get on to the green and you putting, the power gauge is tricky to use as there are no numbers above it. OK, I thought, let's try the maximum: the ball flew way off the green and the running commentary started taking the mickey out of me! So I tried one notch lower but... this time my shot was too short! 62 shots later — and very frustrated — I finally got the ball in, just 65 over par.

Sobbing uncontrollably, I hit the power button.

TO
GUARANTEE
A YEAR'S
SUPPLY OF

**ELECTRIC
BRAIN**

GO BACK TO
PAGE 9

CD-I SPECS*

COMPATIBILITY

- Three and five inch standard audio CD
- CD+ graphics discs and visuals
- Photo CDs
- CD ROM-XA

SPECIFICATIONS

- ✎ Maximum audio capacity: 19 hours (audio only on CD)
- ✎ Maximum text capacity: 250,000 pages (text only on CD)
- ✎ Maximum graphic capacity: 7,000 photographs (graphic data only on CD)
- ✎ Maximum full motion video capacity: 72 minutes (Video only on CD)
- ✎ Motorola 68070 co-processor
- ✎ Infra-red remote control, as well as mouse and keypad operation
- ✎ 1Mb RAM
- ✎ 16 million colour variations
- ✎ Digital video and audio processing
- ✎ Bitstream digital/analogue conversion
- ✎ Full-motion, full-screen, based on Motion Picture Engineering Group (MPEG) standards
- ✎ Compatible with PAL, SECAM and NTSC television standards
Further adaptability with High Definition Television.
- ✎ Playable via all current television and stereo hi-fi systems

* These specs are based on the Philips CD1190 machine.
Other models may differ

CD-I — THE BLURB

You've read what happened when EB's Nick interacted with his CD-I. Now read what the makers, the Dutch company Philips, say about it...

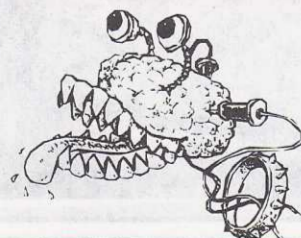
“ Every Philips CD-I player comes with a remote controller, 12 months warranty and free delivery. Just plug it into your TV (and hi-fi for superior quality sound), just pop in the disc and you're ready for the incredible world of CD-I entertainment.

From disc production to playback, CD-I is an accepted worldwide standard, so every CD-I disc will be compatible with every CD-I player, regardless of manufacturer — Philips, Sony and Matsushita (Matsushita trades under brand names such as Panasonic and Technics) to name but a few.

CD-I has the backing of major recording companies, and is also set to become a preferred medium of many leading publishers, such as Time-Life, Reader's Digest, Children's Television Workshop and leading games companies.

And this is only the beginning. Soon, CD-I will offer feature films and ever more realistic games using video of quality superior to VHS. Philips and Kodak are also introducing photography to CD-I. With up to 100 of your own photographs processed on to a single disc, straight from traditional 35mm film, the whole family can view all those memorable moments on your home TV.

CD will become the leading format not just for music but for so many other media. Retailers are already talking about CD-I taking over as the single format for music, video and games. So whether you're looking towards a new entertainments and learning system, or maybe just thinking of replacing or buying a new CD player, there is only one choice. CD-I, the next generation in Compact Disc.



PC ENGINE NEWS

Hudson Soft

The next BIG game from Hudson will be PC Kid 3. It will come on an 8meg HuCard and will be available early April. Apart from being able to enlarge the kid to giant size or shrink him to the size of a mouse, the game will feature a two player simultaneous mode. When two people are playing, they both share energy and lives — so working together is essential. A neat touch! Watch for a full review in a couple of months.

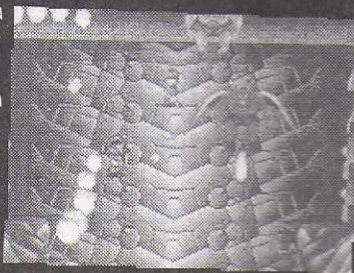
As you read this, Hudson will have released Dungeon Explorer II on Super CD for the Engine. Like the original, the game will enable 1-5 players to fight the forces of evil through mazes of forests, dungeons, caves, etc. As it's on CD, expect a lot of animated screens and a tad more RPG elements.

We previewed Wings of Thunder on Super CD in last month's EB. Latest news on this excellent shoot 'em up is that it will be out at the end of April.

Micro Cabin

Coming up from Micro Cabin will be a two player Mercs type shoot 'em up on Super CD. Although I mention Mercs, this game has you up against evil demons, ghouls and other nasties.

However it will be a one or two player game in which you choose from four characters, move up screen (armed to the teeth with weapons) and destroy everything that moves.



MICRO CABIN'S TWO PLAYER SHOOT 'EM UP! DEMONS AND ALL

NEC Home Electronics

With Magical soon to be released, the next game from NEC HE will be Moon Light Lady on Super CD. Although it sounds like the title of a Four Tops Single it is in fact an action role play game — in the same style as Zelda/Ys.

TTI

From the US on CD, the latest games to be converted into UK form will be Sim Earth, Riot Zone and Bonk III: Bonk's Big Adventure (available in the next month or so).

Also coming up on Super CD: Beyond Shadowgate, Blood Gear, Camp California, CD-Zonk, Cosmic Fantasy 3, Cotton, Dangerous Journey,

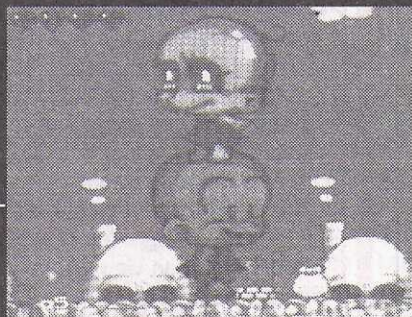
Dungeon Explorer II, Dungeon Master, Dynastic Hero, Exile II, John Madden Football, Might and Magic 3, Military Madness 2 and Power Golf 2. As you can see, most of these are conversions of games from Japanese formats (with some name changes), although a few are new titles. Most surprising is the engine version of John



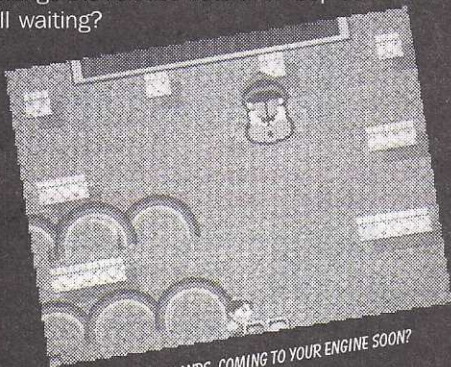
SIM EARTH... THE US VERSION WITH ENGLISH TEXT

NEC Avenue

I don't believe this — Avenue have at long last announced that Rainbow Islands will be released any day now on standard CD-Rom. The game looks great, but... will Avenue change the release date and keep us all waiting?



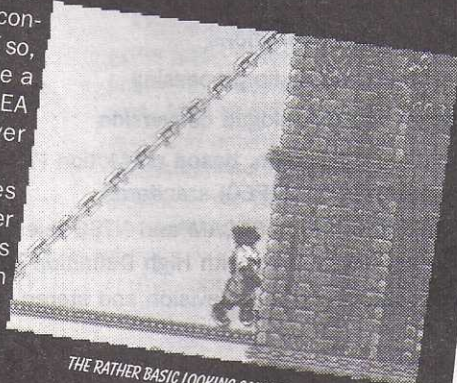
PC KID III - THE NEW TWO PLAYER SEQUEL. HERE BOTH CAN GROW BIG, AND STAND ON MATE'S HEAD!!!!



RAINBOW ISLANDS... COMING TO YOUR ENGINE SOON?

Madden Football — will we see more EA games converted for the machine? If so, it should be great. Imagine a four player version of EA Hockey or four player Basketball.

Other interesting titles include the sequels, Power Golf II and Military Madness II. Neither have featured in the Japanese press, so are likely to be American produced.



THE RATHER BASIC LOOKING CAMP CALIFORNIA



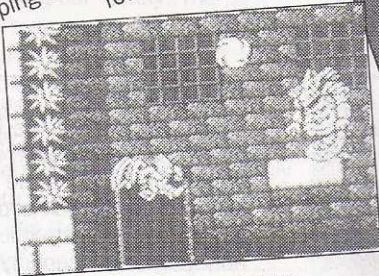
HAND HELD NEWS

Gameboy/American Softworks

One of the best platform games on the Mega Drive is James Pond II - Robocod. Now it's set to be converted for the Gameboy. If it can handle all the bits and bobs of the 16-bit game, this title is sure worth looking out for.

Gameboy/Capcom

Fans of Capcom's Gargoyle's Quest will be delighted to hear that the sequel will be coming out in mid-April. The new game will be more of the same — once again our little demon wanders through the land, hopping and flapping through platforms and traps as well as dis-



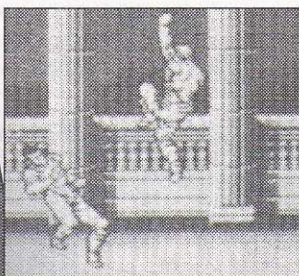
CAPCOM'S GARGOYLE'S QUEST 2

patching those nasties.

Capcom also have a couple of cartoon conversions in preparation for the GB: Darkwing Duck and Tailspin. Both are likely to be arcade platform games.

Gameboy/Konami

There haven't been many good Gameboy games recently, but Konami's next title should give the mono machine a new lease of life. Outburst is a Street Fighter II style, one-on-one beat 'em up with a choice of eight different fighters. The 2meg game features a two-player option, so you can use two linked Gameboys to fight against a friend. As with SF II, Outburst's characters can dragon punch, somersault kick, etc. Out in Japan on 26 March.



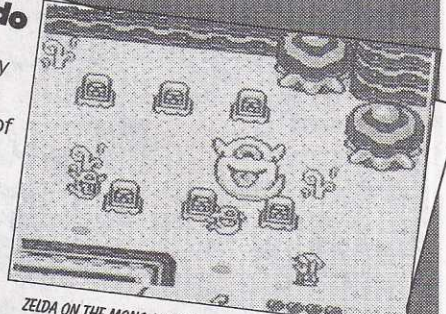
KONAMI'S SFII CLONE - OUTBURST

The US version is likely to be renamed Championship Fighter.

Konami's other titles in the works include Zen Intergalactic Ninja, Tiny Toons Adventures 2, Kid Dracula and Batman: The Animated Series.

Gameboy/Nintendo

The game every Gameboy owner is now waiting for has to be the conversion of Zelda to the little mono machine — it's gonna look fabulous.



ZELDA ON THE MONO MACHINE...HOPEFULLY IT WILL PLAY AS GOOD AS SF

Gameboy/Ocean

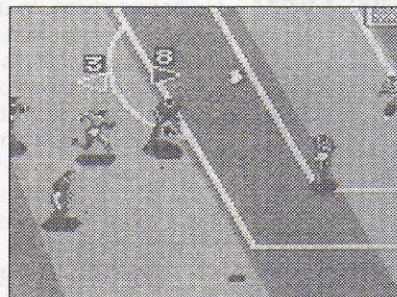
As for the Super Famicom, Lethal Weapon and Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt are in the works for the Gameboy. If these games are as good as the SF versions, then forget Lethal Weapon and snap up Pugsley's as soon as possible!

Gameboy/Tradewest

BattleToads for the GB is one of the best games on the handheld, so it's no surprise that Rare Design are busy putting together the sequel... more action, more crazy animation — you can bet this is going to be another winner.

Game Gear/Sims

Coming soon from Sims (one of the few companies that churn out games for the GG) will be Kick and Rush. Sounds like the arcade football game Kick and Run? You'd be right as it looks very similar.

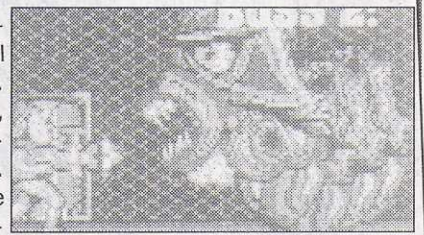


SIMS'S KICK AND RUSH ON GAME GEAR

LYNX/Atari

Rather quiet on the Lynx front, as ever. And when a good game does come out, can you find it in the shops? Where is Dracula? Anyway, latest from Atari is Power Factor. It's another Slime World style game, but set in the future. This is a wicked looking shoot 'em up, very much like 'Psychosis' Obliterator but without the icon controls. As Redd Ace you must blast your way

through 11 levels of mechanical beasts, as well as contending with the usual platforms and a host of nasty traps. Redd is armed with jetpack and blaster, although you can also pick up additional weapons, shields and fuel. Power Factor looks to be the game that all Lynx owners have been waiting for for some time. Available as you read this.



POWER FACTOR ON THE LYNX. OUT WHEN YOU READ THIS. REDD ATTACKS THE SECOND BOSS

EB'S REVIEW RATING SYSTEM

For the benefit of new readers (where have you been all this time?!) this is how we work out our definitive ratings...

VIDEO: How the game looks — presentation, graphics, scrolling, etc. Not always a measure of how amazing it looks, but more a view of how well the graphics suit the game itself.

AUDIO: How it sounds in terms of music, sound effects and speech and, again, how well these suit the actual game — eg. a fast paced shoot 'em up with mellow tunes would be daft!

PLAYABILITY: Generally, is the game fun and satisfying to play?

LASTABILITY: Is it a challenge to complete and are you likely to come back for more?

OVERALL: The overall rating — the higher the better!

THE EB CODE OF PLAY

Video game consoles are generally aimed at younger kids and so most games feature a difficulty setting. But when we review games:

1. The EASY setting is banned because it's only for wimps. Games played are always based on NORMAL and HARD settings. None of this "The game is too easy, I completed it in a day on EASY mode" business — unlike certain magazines we could mention!
2. CONTINUES (extra credits) are also for wimps. The above also applies.

[We dare anyone at Mega magazine to complete Streets of Rage 2 in Mania Mode with no Continues!! See Asparagus Tips for Mania Mode.]

**ASSAULT SUIT VALKEN/
CYBERNATOR
SUPER FAMICOM BY NCS/KONAMI**

This game is the follow up by NCS to their Mega Drive game, Assault Suit Leynos. Valken plays very similar: you take on a bloke in an armoured battle suit and make your way through seven mega stages of enemy fire — so packed out that even Rambo and the Terminator together would have trouble completing the missions!

As Valken, you can walk around, dash, fire in any direction and fly around with your rocket pack. You also have a shield for added protection. As well as your standard machine gun, you can pick up extra weapons along the way, including missile and lasers, all of which can be powered up further by collecting more.

Each mission is different — you may be sneaking into the enemy hanger ("sneaking" is probably the wrong word with the amount of racket he makes!!), destroying one of the enemy's battle cruisers before its engines can be installed, or setting out to gain control of Arc Nova, a giant asteroid between Earth and the moon. Of course each mission is packed to the teeth with other Assault Suits, rocket launchers, gun emplacements, fighter craft, traps and so on — not to mention the prospect of flying through asteroid storms.

That's the basic idea. Now read on to find out what our team of ace EB reviewers made of it...



Marc: Cybernator has certainly taken it's time arriving. Screenshots have been around for about a year now, so has it been worth the

wait?

Right from the start presentation is top notch with a decent intro setting the scene. The graphic style is an unusual one — very detailed, almost hi-res looking with obvious influences from Anime.

The game itself is basically a shoot 'em up, but using some different styles. In the first level you are a cyborg with abilities to fly, using a rocket pack; you must blast anything that moves (and anything that doesn't!) to get to the end of level boss. The second level is a more conventional shoot 'em up as you fly most of the way through it.

Power ups, energy top-ups and extra weapons can be collected along the way by blowing up small canisters that are scattered around the levels.

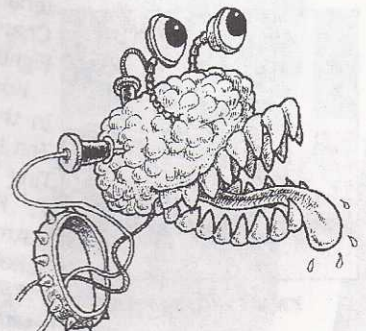
The graphics are superb throughout — loads of detail, lots of colours and some smart use of mode 7 effects. Little touches, like the floors and walls being damaged when you blast them, make this a visually excellent game.

Music is quite decent too...quite bizarre in places but not as good as Konami's own stuff. Even so it's well suited to the action and some interesting instrument sounds are used.

Cybernator does have a few minus points. First, the game is interrupted in places by messages from your base. When this happens the game stops suddenly and a box pops up with a person giving you instructions. This is a bit annoying (and seemingly pointless) and does break up the game at the wrong places! Also, I found the movement of the main character a bit too slow (although the animation is great) and the controls were often a bit awkward.

Another point worth mentioning is the difficulty level — to say it's cranked up HIGH is an understatement! Right from the start you're hassled by loads of enemy sprites and the second boss really takes a hammering!!!!

Overall, Cybernator is a top quality game. Hardened shoot 'em up fans will probably get most out of it, due to its extreme difficulty. Well worth checking out if you're after a shoot 'em up with a bit of a difference.





Dan: Assault Suit Leynos on the Mega Drive was a brilliant game, but was vastly underrated by every magazine that reviewed it. This was probably largely due to the tricky control method and Japanese text.

Apart from myself, only Lee "I was a fighting robot complete with flamethrower and Kenwood multi-chef in a previous life" Scum actually got into the game. (We're both into battle suit/robot type stuff, which has a lot to do with that.)

Now NCS have released a brilliant sequel, which not only expands on the original game but also (by way of greater technical accomplishments and a better control method) is much more accessible — even with the Japanese text.

The first thing you notice when you play ASV is the great attention to detail. The battlesuit stomps around very realistically, with great animation on the legs and shoulders and great clanking SFX. Firing the vulcan weapon results in a great recoil action and a stream of shells flying from the back of the suit. Very nice. Shooting the landscape causes small parts of it to be destroyed. Also very nice.

Gameplay in ASV is truly brilliant, even better than Leynos. The controls are very well organised and offer a superb degree of control over your suit. The levels themselves are superbly designed and have great variety. The best are the attack on Ark Nova (a meteorite space station), a scrolling shoot-em-up level (but sadly not up to Spriggan Mk 2 standards), an underground cave level (complete with searchlight) and your final encounter with a HUGE last boss!

Graphically ASV is excellent. Everything is very well drawn and coloured with a suitably dull palette. There are also some great special effects, such as the huge expanded

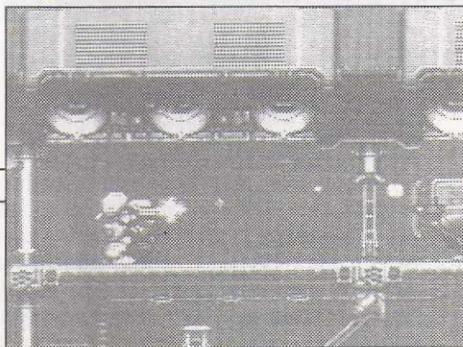
explosions and the scene when the Ark Nova begins to burn up in the atmosphere.

Sound is exceptional. As well as the remarkable SFX, the game contains some of the best music heard on the SF. Although one or two tunes are less than great, there are some superbly dramatic pieces, with great percussion and some brilliantly synthesized voices.

Although the music won't be everyone's cup of Earl Grey, serious game music fans will appreciate it.

ASV is a brilliant game — but it does have faults. The main one is that the game doesn't take long to complete. But as long as you don't continue (CONTINUES are for shandy drinkers anyway) it should last you a reasonable amount of time. My other criticism is that there are some missed opportunities. Anyone who finished Leynos will remember the brilliant last level — a giant space battle, requiring you to fly into the heart of the enemy fleet, while lasers from both sides flew across the screen. I was really hoping for something similar here, but it was not to be. I would also have liked to see some elements from Naxat's superb Spriggan Mk 2, particularly the selectable weapon sets.

I would advise all readers to take a look at Assault Suit Valken — it should appeal to just about everyone (not just me and Lee "Breville sandwich toaster" Scum).



METAL MICKEY, EAT YOUR HEART OUT!!



Nick: Being an Anime freak, when I heard that there was a new game out with mobile suits in it, I grabbed it at the first opportunity.

Cybernator is well presented and is up to the usual Konami standard — with fast and furious action, brilliant game play, beautiful graphics and excellent sound.

Cybernator stars you as the pilot of a "mobile suit" which — in case you are not in touch with Anime (why not?!) — is a massive exoskeleton with big guns and various other death dealing abilities, controlled by human operators.

The game has all the controls set out right and soon enough you will be blasting the enemy scum out of space, the sky, the sea, the ground and almost anywhere else! You get immense satisfaction when you see chunks of armour flying off the enemy, wasted bullet shells flying behind you and enemy troops scattering... (Whoa! Calm down Nick! Take your Valium.)

When you are playing the game messages pop up; in my view these add to the game. For example on one level you are hurtling through the atmosphere at a great speed and these enemy troops start attacking you when the following exchange

occurs:

You: Oh s****! Here come those prats.

Enemy One: Split into attack formation and attack the enemy suit.

Enemy Two/Three: Roger/affirmative. Several blastings later...

You: Ha Ha! Couldn't stand up to the

awesome might of Nick, eh? Oh no! One of the enemy suits is burning up in the atmosphere — I'll help him!

Now if anyone can tell me the point of saving the enemy when he has just blown ten tons of crapola out of you they will win my respect — personally I think it is pointless.

The game has seven levels and each of them is action packed with lots of targets to blow away. The only thing that lets it down is the appearance of corny messages; an option to turn these off would have been great.



HAVE YOU SUBSCRIBED YET?

POWERMONGER MEGA DRIVE BY ELECTRONIC ARTS



Onn: If I said Powermonger was my favourite game to date (the Amiga version that is), then you would expect a good review here, wouldn't you? And you'd be right... in a way.

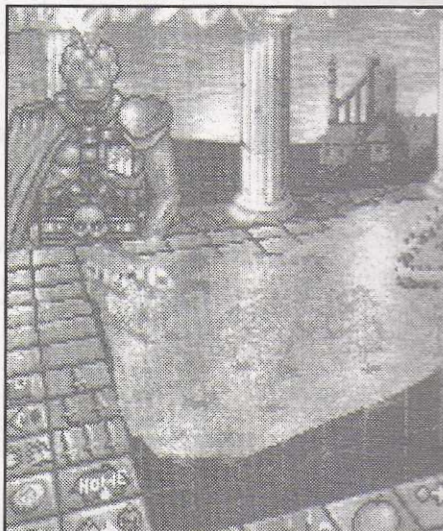
Powermonger is hard to describe. It's like an arcade action strategy war game — in other words it combines a mixture of everything in one game. This is why it's so good.

The game is played on a main map screen, viewed in 3D isometric vision; you can zoom in and out and rotate around. The object of the game is as follows:

You play the leader of a small army, which must conquer a number of islands, each of which is inhabited by a number of different (and bigger) armies. To achieve this you have to give commands to your leader through icons on the right hand side of the map. You can tell your leader to recruit men, pick up weapons, move to a certain location, attack, make an alliance and/or trade with an opponent, kill sheep, eat, invent weapons, etc. All these commands are also affected by what posture you adopt — "passive", "normal" or "aggressive".

For example, if you give an attack command in the passive mode, your army will drive back opponents but won't kill them. This leaves you the option of recruiting those men at a later stage. However in aggressive mode... it's blood, guts, fighting, rape, pillage, nuclear wipeout, interplanetary annihilation — well, the first two anyway! When you're inventing items, aggressive mode will let you create power items like a catapult, while in passive mode you would be making boats or even pots for trading.

As Powermonger is a strategy game, winning involves employing different tactics against different opponents on different islands. Sometimes you can just build a large army and go round killing off one opponent after another. On other islands you may be confronted by a giant size



THIS PICTURE IS NOT THE MEGA DRIVE'S VERSION, BUT THE AMIGA VERSION. THIS IS BECAUSE THE SCREEN SHOTS WE HAD OF THE MEGA DRIVE VERSION WERE EXTREMELY DARK (IE YOU COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING!)

army — so it may be a better idea to invent a catapult and sit tight in a nearby town. Then when they come for you, you can fire your weapon and nail the leader between the eyes first time!

Another tactic is to arm your men with bows and arrows, equip them with boats and then attack an enemy from the water. And my favourite: hide in a forest and when the opponent starts to invent — gathering wood in the process — you single out one guy and pounce on the blighter. This reduces the opponent's

army by one each time, giving you the option to attack later on!

But what of the Mega Drive version? Firstly, Powermonger IS a game played with a mouse... and this is crucial to its appeal. As the MD doesn't have a mouse as yet, playing with the joypad is very very tricky indeed! Not only is pointing your pointer at the right spot very difficult, but the button arrangement for flipping the pointer to the map, the main play area and the command icons are all very confusing. Why they couldn't have left it like the Amiga version is beyond me.

But if you can stand all this, then Powermonger is virtually identical to the computer versions. Graphics and sound aren't as good as on the Amiga, but they're adequate.

Worth getting? If you are a strategy buff, this is definitely the best of them all — if you can get to grips with the controls, that is. To put it plainly: if you can play Populous or Lemmings with the joypad, you'll be alright. Me? Well as I have the Amiga version with the good old mouse, I don't think I'll be playing the MD game. For the average shoot/beat 'em up gamer, this might not be your cup of tea as there isn't a lot of blood and guts action and each game can last quite a long time.

SCORE

Video	75%
Audio	65%
Playability	91%
Lastability	90%

89%

SWAPLINE

This is the bit where you can sell, swap, or whatever. It's our fantastic EB readers' classified section. It's FREE to the public. But, of course, no trade adverts can be accepted in this bit.

Send all classifieds to the usual EB address and we'll fit them in, space permitting.

WANTED: PAL Booster for PC Engine. Good swap deal or price paid. Also wanted: Thunderforce 4 on Mega Drive (not Jap). Will swap for columns and Magic Hat (Jap). Tel: 0602 612713 after 6pm.

FOR SALE: Super Nintendo games: Super Smash TV (US), Super Tennis (UK). Sell for £25 each or swap for acceptable titles (official Pilotwings, etc.) Phone J. Webb on 0278 783274.

FOR SALE: MD game: Phantasy Star II, £15. PC Engine games: Ninja Spirit, Side Arms, Vigilante, Shinobi, P47, Doraman, Dragon Spirit, Rock On, Psycho Chaser, Chase HQ, £10 each. Also R-Type, Image Fight, Super Start Soldier, £15 each. Lynx games: Warbirds, Gauntlet 3, Blue Lighting, Rygar, Paperboy, Electrocop, £10 each. Gameboy games: Nemesis 2, Battleloads, £12 each. Plus Turtles, Contra, Turrican, Dr. Mario, Faceball, Double Dragon, Revenge of the Gator (Pinball), Super RC Pro Am, £10 each. Buy 2 or more games and I may throw in a free one. Ring Dan on 0602 202295.

46 MILLION YEARS AGO (EVO) SUPER FAMICOM BY ENIX



Onn: Enix sure come up with some strange games. First there was Actraiser, an arcade platform slash 'em up with a Sim-City/Populous game included.

Then they followed it up with Soul Blazer, a Ys/Zelda Action RPG with puzzle elements. Now we have 46 Million Years Ago — or EVO as it's known in the USA — a sort of arcade action RPG with touches of Sim Earth/Create-Your-Own-Creature game thrown in.

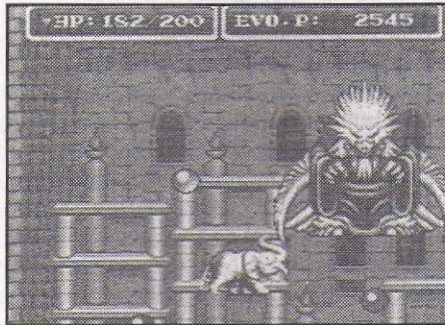
Before I describe the game I must point out that it features a fair bit of Japanese text.

As you might expect, the game is set 46 million years ago when life on earth had just formed. You play the part of a tadpole-like life form.

In many ways it resembles Sega's MD game Ecco. Like all RPGs, you begin with a certain amount of hit points and proceed through several levels (maps), each of which comprises several stages. On stage one you encounter a number of underwater plants and jellyfish. Touch the jellyfish and they will sting you, reducing your HP. However, bite them a couple of times and they will turn into meat, which you can gulp down. This not only increases your HP, but adds to your EVO points. Plants will also increase your HP.

EVO points are the key to this game. Press SELECT and a menu of four options appears. The latter three don't do anything much, but the first brings up a whole set of evolution options. Once you have enough EVO points you can cash them in to change parts of your creature. Generally the more points you get for a certain part, the better it is — although in some circumstances this

isn't the case. Starting with your weedy tadpole creature, you can change its head to that of a dolphin, or its mouth to one with more teeth than Jaws. You can have a dorsal fin, another nice set of fins underneath,



HERE YOU'VE EVOLVED INTO AN ELEPHANT...AND MEET THE BIG NASTY BIRD BOSS!! HE'S ONE MEAN MOTHER...AND AS YET, I HAVEN'T DISPOSED OF IT!!!

different size tails for speed, tougher skin and even a horn.

At the end of each stage you get a map of the level and a flashing green dot indicating where you can go next — a bit like Super Mario. But as you progress through the stages the other creatures also evolve. So from encountering jellyfish you progress to eels, shellfish, fish that swim away from you when you get near, armoured fishes and sharks! At the end of the level (6 stages) there's a massive shark for you to kill. If you succeed you can jump out of the water onto land. Then you can evolve legs and breathe air. A time portal appears and you'll be whisked to level two.

As a small reptile, you continue your progress, snapping up lizards and an assortment of dinosaurs. Then it's your chance to

evolve to bird form, rodent, mammal and so on.

The graphics are brilliant: detailed parallax scrolling platforms and backdrops, day to night changes and different weather conditions as you move around. The animation of the creatures is adequate but not too hot. Control of the flying creatures is a bit iffy at times. Sometimes when you want to jump on a creature (very handy with big claws!) you end up flying. Or vice versa.

Sound is rather poor. There are continuous rolling, boring tunes with only the occasional heavy stuff when you meet a boss. Sound effects are minimal and could have been a lot better.

As for the game itself... since I got it I've been playing it for two nights (or should that be mornings) running. It's one of those games that you can't stop playing as you want to see what creature you can evolve into next and what lies in wait on the next stage. "46" is very much like Sim City: not terribly exciting to play and not terribly difficult — but very playable in a strange sort of way. If you like Sim City or the Creation part of Actraiser, this will probably suit you. But if you are after fast arcade action give this a miss: evolving a creature takes ages — it can take an hour just to get off level one!

SCORE

Video	85%
Audio	65%
Playability	85%
Lastability	60%

80%

IMPERIUM SUPER FAMICOM BY VIC TOKAI



Onn: With a name like Vic Tokai you would think they were Japs, but this is actually an American game. And as we all know, the Yanks are pretty c*** at producing decent shoot 'em ups... and Imperium is certainly that!

When you start the game it looks very much like the Mega Drive game Musha Aleste, a vertical scroller with the same looking robot (but smaller) and firing multiple vulcan cannons. But as soon as the enemy appears — small green drones that jitterbug around the screen with spinning blue craft — all feeling of a great Musha-like game goes out of the window. You only

have one life in this game, but several bars of energy which are reduced when hit. You start with one basic weapon, while at the top of the screen a "NEXT EXP" reading is displayed. This number indicates the amount of points required for an additional weapon, an increase in energy and/or a power-up for your weapon. As you can guess, you have to shoot down a lot of enemies before you get anything! The game also suffers from the drawback that enemy craft require a large number of hits to destroy them.

Graphics are very average — not a patch on Super Aleste. Audio is pretty awful too, with boring, short and irritating tunes, as

well as rather poor sound effects.

The game is also very tough to play due to its useless weapons and the fact that, if you are hit, your weapons are immediately downgraded. Overall Imperium must rate as one of the worst SF shoot 'em ups to date — coming real close to D-Force standards!

SCORE

Video	45%
Audio	40%
Playability	30%
Lastability	25%

30%

LETHAL WEAPON SUPER FAMICOM BY OCEAN



Marc: Strangely, although the cover picture of this game is based on Lethal Weapon 3, the game is actually called plain Lethal Weapon, taking in elements from all three films to date. Either way, what it boils down to is a multi-level platform game. There are several missions to choose from: you can take out drug barons and their consignments at the docks, rescue Leo Getz from a nearby



office, jump on moving platforms, shoot the bad guys, collect the ammo and time units... and so on.

Lethal Weapon may make for a great series of films. But as a game this title

doesn't stack up to much.

Ocean started off well on the SF with their Addams Family game and so, despite the fact that this is another film licence game, I had a tiny hope that it might be OK. Alas, it was not to be!

The SF version is identical to its Amiga counterpart in virtually every way and Ocean must learn that they can't get away with doing that!

The game starts with a really dodgy digitised picture from the film; you must then select a level by walking Riggs to one of a number of doors. Each door has a different scenario behind it, so you don't get stuck playing the same level on each go.

Graphics are small and quite poorly drawn (although there is some parallax scrolling here and there) and the animation is abysmal — but hilarious!. When Riggs jumps he puts his arms out to the sides as if he's going to fly from platform to platform; his walk is just as ridiculous. Unfortunately, you won't be laughing long as the gameplay definitely isn't funny.

Whoever test-played this game should

stand in a corner and write: "I should have test-played Lethal Weapon for longer than one minute" one million times!!! There are so many flaws that you could almost fill a magazine listing them all. To put it mildly, Lethal Weapon is just no fun to play at all. It's scattered with oh-so-annoying bits that just make you turn off after five minutes.

Music isn't bad, but then again it isn't good and is easily forgotten. Sound effects are tacky and almost pointless.

The forthcoming "Addams Family 2" will hopefully show us what Ocean's team CAN do when they put the necessary effort in. But Lethal Weapon just shows how amazingly bad a game can be when it's rushed together to cash in on a film's success.

SCORE

Video	65%
Audio	70%
Playability	40%
Lastability	40%

55%

ROLO TO THE RESCUE MEGA DRIVE BY ELECTRONIC ARTS



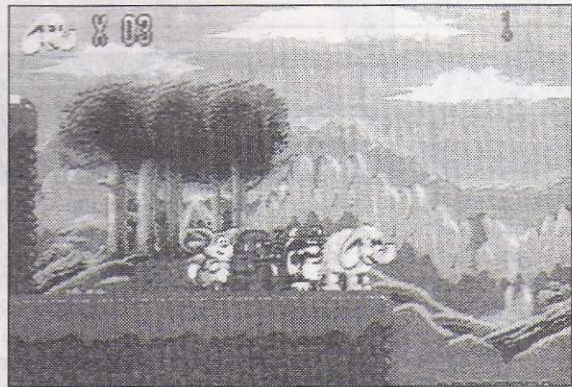
Dan: The elephant, king of the jungle (I thought it was the lion. Ed.), ship of the desert (I thought that was the camel. Ed.), man's best friend

(Erm... yes. Ed.) — call it what you will. Elephants are pretty big anyway, except for this Rolo chap, who's about 1.5 inches high (on my screen anyway — and I've got a big one. Fnarr!),

Rolo to the Rescue is a pretty damn good platform game. The first and most

obvious plus is the graphics. While the backdrops and use of colour are fairly average, the sprites are truly lovable. Rolo and his friends are just so cute and cuddly.

The animation on Rolo is brilliant as he charges about; all the other characters have cute mannerisms too, for want of a better term — like the otter who falls asleep and the squirrel who sneaks nuts into his mouth when left alone. Gameplay is great too. Rolo is raised above most platform games because each cuddly animal has special abilities which must be used to overcome the various obstacles within the game.



I WON'T GIVE MY LAST ROLO TO ANYONE!

Figuring out the levels is not terribly difficult, but it is fun mainly because there are lots of them. Each level also contains various hidden sections, which is always a big plus in my book.

So what's wrong with this game? Well, Rolo to the Rescue suffers from the same problem as Kid Chameleon — ie. there

are lots of levels but no password or save option, so completing the game has to be done in one marathon session. The other weak(ish) point is the sound. While the tunes and SFX are okay,

some interesting samples and catchy music would have helped the game a lot.

Rolo to the Rescue is a good, solid game which is recommended to platform game fans who don't mind playing one that will take a very long sitting to finish.

SCORE

Video	91%
Audio	60%
Playability	88%
Lastability	90%

87%

JERRY GLANVILLE'S PIGSKIN FOOTBRAWL MEGA DRIVE BY RAZOR SOFT



Dan: Question: What do the terms "Get the ball", "Pass it" and "Let's kick some butt" have in common? (Vinny Jones? Ed.)

Answer: They are all included in Jerry Glanville's Pigskin Football. (Yep! I was right about Vinny Jones! Ed.)

SCORE

Video	70%
Audio	75%
Playability	80%
Lastability	40%

60%

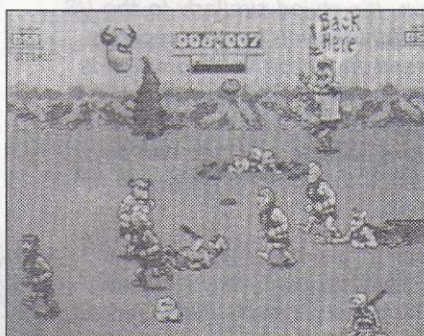
Sorry about that extremely lame introduction but, hey, it's all I could think of and hopefully might give you a tiny clue about the nature of this game.

Footbrawl is basically an American Football variant, but a little more violent and with a much looser structure. Within the game, only one player can be directly controlled (the Quarterback, if you wish). Other than this, any player can be made to punch, pass the ball (there are three different passes) or punt. The QB himself is under direct joystick control and can perform a diving tackle. The only other control avail-

able to the player is selection of plays, of which there are five (though they don't seem to make a great deal of difference to me.)

The actual gameplay itself seems very interesting at first — not because there's a great deal to it, but because it is both violent and humourous. When players bump into each other they start to fight. This is done in cartoon style, with a cloud obscuring the action until a victor emerges. If the QB is involved in the fight and he has picked up a concealed weapon, his opponent will end up with a sword through his chest or an axe in his head. A summary of fatalities is given at half and full time. The humour is enhanced by great sampled screams and speech (hence the first paragraph of this review).

Although Pigskin Footbrawl offers (very) short term fun, it has no real content and is completely shallow — just like other Razorsoft games. The graphics and sound are OK, but there was no lasting interest for me here.



AND JERRY'S ON THE BALL...HE PASSES IT...AND GETS AN AXE IN HIS CHEST!

CALIFORNIA GAMES 2 SUPER FAMICOM BY DTMC



Marc: California Games was quite a big hit on the Commodore 64 about 8 years ago — justifiably so as it had a whole load of decent events and some really nice graphics.

Now California Games has been released for the SF and, given the possibilities available with the game format and the hardware, it's a real shame that the end result is a total shambles!

So what's wrong with the game? Well, for a start there are only five events — yes, five events. Cor! What good value for money. Secondly, out of these five events there isn't a single decent one. Not even ONE event that you would want to play more than once.

To put the final nails in California Games 2's coffin, the graphics range from poor to average (even the F-Zero-style jet ski is slow!) and the sound is absolutely abysmal.

I have to say that there isn't a single thing worth recommending about this game — it's just the sort of rubbish that we don't want to see released. Slapped wrists all round for the programmers!

SCORE

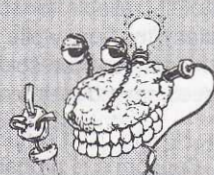
Video	75%
Audio	60%
Playability	50%
Lastability	45%

55%

NEXT MONTH IN YOUR MEGATASTIC

ELECTRIC BRAIN

Top Previews and Reviews



EB 34 gets technical as we tell you how to open up your Super Famicom and tweak the insides with a screwdriver!

PLUS: a round-up of JOYPADS and a look at CD-ROM for the MD

AND: reviews of new Batman games, including Batman - Return of the Joker (SF & MD)

NOT TO MENTION... all your fave regulars (Asparagus Wives, etc.)

ELECTRIC BRAIN ISSUE 34: ON SALE 29 APRIL 1993

Be there or be somewhere else.

LET'S HAVE A PEEK

Joypads are good controllers once you get used to them — particularly the SF joypads, which are very niftily designed. But for some games, especially Street Fighter II, a joystick is an essential item. But which one should you buy? The EB crew gave some 'sticks a test drive (well, more a test waggle).

When buying a joystick you should first ask yourself a few questions: Does it look nice? Does it have enough knobs and dials? Will it still work if I drop it from a tall building? Will I be able to use it to hack the limbs from anyone I dislike? And lastly, is it any good for playing games?

SUPER FAMICOM STICKS Capcom Power Stick Fighter

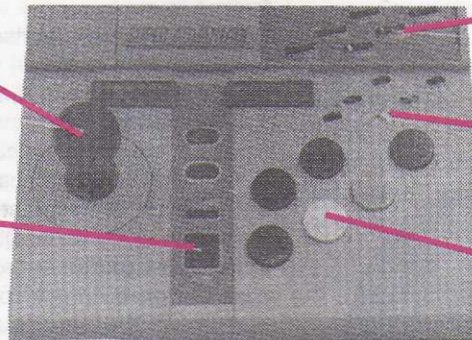
This is Capcom's stick designed specifically for playing Street Fighter II. It has a microswitched stick, six membrane switched buttons, three-speed rapid fire for every button, three-speed slowmo, a 4-8 way switch and a lead that connects it to the 8-bit Famicom (Japanese NES). An infra red remote control unit can also be purchased.

Dan: Although the stick and buttons work very well, with good feedback and quick response, I don't find the stick very useful for playing SF II. Although it works better than the pad, I didn't find it to be totally reliable for special attacks, particularly the screw pile driver. At the price this tends to be sold at, I cannot really recommend it. It's also very light.

Onn: Having used a number of SF sticks, Capcom's is probably the best. It has a few faults — like the joystick is too loose (I prefer stiff ones!) and it slides about when resting on your knee. But for overall performance, this is the biz. It's fairly pricey, but definitely worth getting. SF II? I can play it fairly well with this stick, although I prefer to play the game with the joystick. One bad point: the lead is too short.

OVERSIZED JOYSTICK
8-WAY DIRECTIONAL CONTROL PROVIDES TRUE ARCADE ACTION

VARIABLE SPEED SLOW MOTION
SLOW DOWN THE ENTIRE GAME WHEN THINGS GET OUT OF CONTROL



TURBO SPEED
A FULLY ADJUSTABLE FIRE-CONTROL SYSTEM (UP TO 30 SHOTS PER SECOND)

AUTO TURBO
CONTINUOUS FIRING THAT'S HANDS-FREE. YOU WON'T FIND THIS ANYWHERE ELSE

FIRING BUTTONS
INSTANTANEOUS RESPONSE AND BUILT TO LAST

Super Advantage (ASCII)

This stick is very similar to other ASCII sticks. The stick and buttons all use membrane switches and there is a metal plate in the base for extra weight and stability. The stick has a variable speed slowmo and variable speed rapid/rapid auto fire on each button. It's styled similarly to the US SNES (unless you buy the recently released Japanese version which is made in the SF colour scheme) — so those of you who own that revolting looking machine can buy a joystick that co-ordinates with it perfectly.

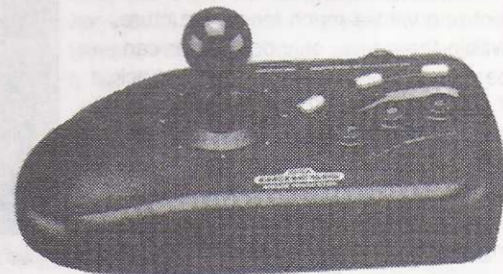
Dan: This is a strange stick. The stick itself has hardly any feedback, which makes diagonals a little vague. The button layout is none too great either and the buttons themselves are not of the highest quality. Despite this, I find this stick much better for Street Fighter II than the CPSF, mainly because it is much more precise and therefore much more reliable for special attacks — especially the screw pile driver which is incredibly easy with this joystick. This model has good weight too. Recommended heartily to SF II players.

Onn: Eeek! For looks I give this 1 out of 10. As for usage, although the stick is very good (me being used to the ASCII stick on the Engine), the buttons are awful. Not only are they terribly arranged (making certain games difficult to play), but the buttons themselves aren't particularly great. This one's not for me...

especially when playing SF II.

MEGA DRIVE JOYSTICKS Arcade Power Stick (SEGA)

This model has a microswitched stick and membrane switched buttons. It also has variable speed rapid fire and a metal plate in the base for extra weight. Whereas many joysticks have square corners, which can dig into your hand



during a frenzied session (or even if you're using them to play a game!) this one has a rounded base to prevent discomfort.

Dan: This joystick has good weight, is rugged, very comfortable to use, is very responsive and looks nice. Although it lacks fancy extras like slowmo, auto fire, etc., it's a great stick that is perfect in nearly every way. Only the buttons let it down, as they have a slightly dead feel. In my opinion, the best joystick for the MD.

Onn: Yes — probably the best stick for the MD, although the buttons are a bit on the sticky side.

AT YOUR POLE

Cluster Stick/Power Clutch SG (ASCII)

This is a membrane switched stick with membrane switched buttons. Variable speed rapid fire and slowmo are included. This stick is very similar to the Arcade Power Stick, but it has a leaf switch stick. It's also much lighter and smaller. Unless you really hate microswitched joysticks, get the Arcade power stick instead.



PRO 1

The PRO 1 uses the same switch systems as the Power Stick, but also includes a number of options like standard/independent auto-fire switches, turbo speed indicators and slow motion.

Dan: This is an awful stick. The buttons are very unresponsive and the stick itself has too much travel, making it very imprecise. The whole unit is also much too light. One to avoid.

PC ENGINE STICKS PRO 1/XE 1 PC

For details, see description of Mega Drive version above.

Onn: I was tempted to buy this at a certain computer show, but went for the XE-8 instead. My friend, the M T Kid, decided this looked better... but he made a big mistake.

ASCII Stick Engine (ASCII)

This is a membrane switched stick with membrane switched buttons. It has variable speed rapid fire and single speed slow motion. A metal plate is fixed to the base for extra weight.

Dan: This is a good, durable device with responsive stick and buttons. But it is not without problems, as the buttons occasionally stick down and the whole unit is a little too light, even with the metal base. Despite this, it's the best Engine joystick I've used.

Onn: I bought this direct from Japan over three years ago and it has yet to go wrong. So reliability is one of its strong points. It would be nice to have it microswitched, but you can't have everything I suppose. Excellent.

XE-8 PC-90 (Honeybee)

This has a membrane switched stick and membrane switched buttons. Variable rapid fire and slow motion are included. The unit can be rotated to alter the position of buttons I and II.

Dan: This is an OK stick. It's a little long and lacking in feedback. Durability is questionable (Lee "clumsy git" Scum snapped the Ed's while playing Fighting Street!). Better to go for the ASCII stick.

Onn: As mentioned, I bought this at a computer show. The stick itself is a bit loose and so are the buttons, which are a bit iffy at times on actual contact.

MULTI-FORMAT STICKS

For those of you who own several machines (pretty essential these days) multi-format joysticks offer the best value for money. As the old Chinese proverb says, one stick is cheaper than three.

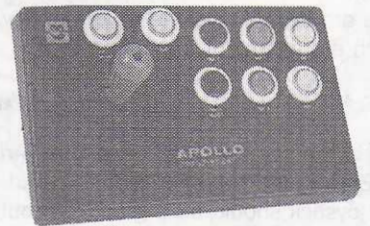
Apollo PRO Joystick (HCH)

There are several different Apollo joysticks, but the best one works on the 8-bit Famicom/Japanese NES, the Super Famicom/US SNES, the MD/Genesis, the PC Engine and the Neo Geo. When you consider that it also works with the Super Gun and various computers, you will see that it caters for quite a lot of machines. The stick itself is microswitched, with microswitched buttons. The unit connects with different machines by means of a simple bridge adapter, which also houses a simple rapid fire/slowmo unit. The stick comes

complete with two screw on handles: a traditional ball top and a bat handle. Four suction cups are attached to the base for extra stability.

Dan: Although this joystick seems to offer great value for money if you've got several machines, I'm not so sure. The stick itself has massive travel and is very loose. This means that control is very imprecise and unresponsive. The unit is also too light and the suction cups don't help a great deal.

This joystick is being marketed as a good SF II stick, but sadly this is not the case. Due to the huge travel, performing charge moves (like sonic booms, etc.) is much slower than with a pad. Fireballs and dragon punches are easier, but in this area the Apollo still falls way behind the CPSF or Super Advantage. The but-



tons are also a little too far apart for SF II. The only positive thing I can say about the Apollo is that it's great for Screw-pile drivers.

IMP Super 328 Intelligent Mega Power Stick (!)

This joystick works for the PC Engine and the Mega Drive. The Stick is microswitched and the buttons contain leaf switches. Variable rapid fire is included. This stick is actually a slight redesign of the Neo Geo joystick. An optional infra-red attachment is also available for cordless action.

Note: Although it works with the Mega Drive, it won't act as a two button joystick for computers. So games like Street Fighter II and Flashback for the Amiga won't accept it, even though they will work with the standard Mega Drive pad!

Dan: This is a good, precise joystick with great feedback. It is only let down by its lack of weight and the slightly dodgy buttons. There are better sticks

FEATURE

available but this is a worthy purchase.

Onn: Great stick — in fact the best of all sticks. It's not too loose and you can really feel those microswitches, although the buttons feel like they are made of wood with a nail underneath to make contact with the board. One snag: the ball on top comes loose too easily.

Wontec WT-868 (Wontec Int Co Ltd)

This is one strange stick that works with the PC Engine and Sega Systems. The stick (situated in the middle of the unit) and the five buttons to its right are all leaf switched. The stick itself has a paddle handle and is removable. Why? Well, on the left there is also a pad, so you can use whichever suits you. Unfortunately, there is no way of disabling one or the other, so you can easily touch the pad while using the stick. Two of the five buttons have rapid fire. There are also variable auto-fire switches and slow motion buttons. The whole unit is very plasticky.

Dan: Aaaargh! I hate this joystick. The stick itself is so high up on the base that it completely over-balances the whole unit, rendering it useless. The buttons aren't too great either. One to avoid.

Onn: A pretty awful stick. I couldn't stand clipping the pad when using the stick, so I opened it up to remove the actual pad — and totally knackered it in the process. Well... it still works, but in PC Engine mode it occasionally pauses by itself. It does however work with computers as a two button joystick!

OTHER STICKS

Here are details of some other sticks we've been unable to get hold of, but which are worthy of a mention.

3-in-1 Powerstick

This is the same as the Mega Drive Arcade Power Stick but it also works on the PC Engine and 8-bit Famicom. Considering how good the Arcade power stick is, this joystick should be a great buy, but it seems to have been discontinued. Still, if you can find one, get one.

Championship Joystick (C+L Control)

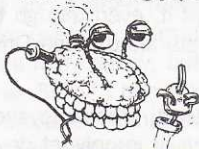
This Super Famicom joystick was designed for use with SF II. It looks exactly the same as the arcade controls, although it has no extras like rapid fire, etc. It has had good reviews in America, where it sells for \$70 — so it would be likely to cost at least that if imported here. Although expensive, this joystick looks to be truly arcade quality.

Super Stick

Very similar to the Championship joystick, the Super Stick is a Super Famicom stick designed for use with Street Fighter II. This stick looks to be arcade quality and is available in one or two player versions. In America, the one player stick sells for \$99 and the two player version for \$180. If any are imported here, the price will almost certainly be ridiculously high.

ELECTRIC BRAIN'S CHOICE

The following joysticks are the ones we'd select as best of their kind:



SF: Capcom Power Stick Fighter

MD: Arcade Powerstick

Engine: ASCII Arcade Stick

*Note: These Super Famicom joysticks don't work with the official SNES!!!!

MEGA DRIVE STREET FIGHTER II?

Every Sega magazine states that Sega are set to release Street Fighter II - Championship Edition. We at Electric Brain still think this is highly unlikely. Although it was stated that "a source at Sega has confirmed that the game will be available mid-April", who exactly is this so called source? The janitor? The boy that comes in once a week to change the drinking water?

If it were coming out, we would have certainly heard about it from Sega ages ago! I mean, rumours of it have been going around since before Christmas; if Sega did have the licence, they would surely have announced the fact as soon as possible to encourage people to buy a Mega Drive instead of a Super Famicom/SNES. Sega are not that stupid!!

Our opinion is that Sega do NOT have SF II in the works for the Mega Drive. The reports are based on wishful thinking by certain magazines — when they heard that Final Fight was coming out and that Sega were to release a six button pad. They of course put two and two together: Capcom connection plus 6-button pad equals Street Fighter II.

Do we think SF II will EVER come out for the Mega Drive? Well.... as the Final Fight CD was released for the Japanese Sharp X68000 computer a few weeks before Sega announced its conversion to the Mega Drive, one should keep an eye on the Sharp X68000 market. If a version of SF II appears for this computer, then you can guarantee it!

COLIN'S CONSOLE

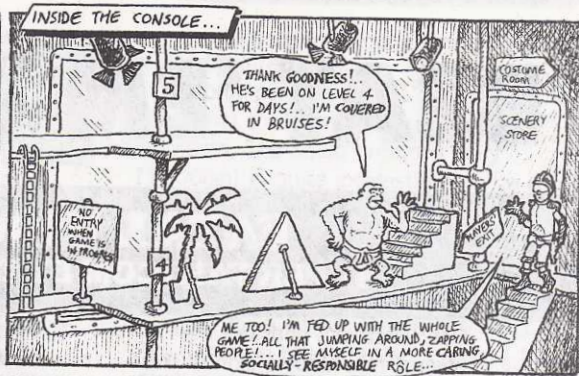


YES!... I'VE FINALLY GOT LASER WARRIOR PAST THE SUMO GORILLA AND ONTO LEVEL FIVE....

BEEP! BUZZ! CLICK!



PHEW!... I'LL TAKE A BREAK FOR MY DINNER....



INSIDE THE CONSOLE...

THANK GOODNESS! HE'S BEEN ON LEVEL 4 FOR DAYS! I'M COVERED IN BRUISES!

ME TOO! I'M FED UP WITH THE WHOLE GAME! ALL THAT JUMPING AROUND, ZAPPING PEOPLE!... I SEE MYSELF IN A MORE CARING, SOCIALLY-RESPONSIBLE ROLE...



... I FEEL I'M BEING TYPE-CAST AS THE DUMB GUY... I'M GOING TO SEE IF MY AGENT CAN GET ME INTO A GAME WITH A BIT MORE OF A MENTAL CHALLENGE...

IF YOU FEEL LIKE A MENTAL CHALLENGE, HOW ABOUT GETTING US SOME FOOD?... I'M STARVING!



HELLO, ECO-WOMAN... WHY DON'T YOU GO TO THE CANTEEN FOR SOME FOOD?

BECAUSE OUR CANTEEN GOT ACCIDENTALLY ZAPPED BY A STRAY MISSILE FROM THE GULF WAR GAME COLIN WAS PLAYING THIS MORNING.



OH, THAT'S AWFUL! THEY SHOULD BAN THESE AGGRESSIVE WAR-GAMES... WAS ANYONE HURT?

I DON'T KNOW... ALL I KNOW IS THAT I'M STARVING AND SO IS EVERYONE ELSE!

YES, I CAN FEEL MY RIBS ALREADY!

IF I DON'T GET SOME FOOD SOON I'M GOING TO GET ANGRY... AND YOU WON'T LIKE ME WHEN I'M...



ALRIGHT! ALRIGHT! LOOK, I HEARD COLIN SAY HE WAS GOING TO HAVE HIS DINNER... WHY DON'T I NIP OUT AND NICK SOME?

HMMMPH! WELL I SUPPOSE IF YOU COULD BRING BACK A COUPLE OF FISH FINGERS THAT WOULD BE BETTER THAN NOTHING...

OOH YES! JUST A FEW DOZEN CHIPS FOR ME, PLEASE...

AND ME! AND DON'T FORGET THE SALT, OR ELSE...

...DON'T FORGET I'M A VEGETARIAN...



I'LL COME AND HELP YOU WORK OUT HOW TO GET THE FOOD...

O.K.



OUTSIDE...

WELL, I RECKON THE FOOD'S UP ON THIS TABLE... BUT I DON'T THINK I'M PROGRAMMED TO JUMP THAT FAR.

LET ME HAVE A GO WITH YOUR ROPE-GUN...



I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO HAVE A GO WITH THIS THING...

POW!



CLUNK!

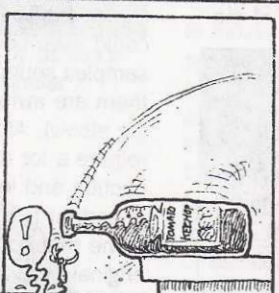
GOOD SHOT!



SEE?... IT'S JUST A QUESTION OF APPLYING A BIT OF INTELLIGENCE AND SKILL... SHALL I CLIMB FIRST?...



?



!



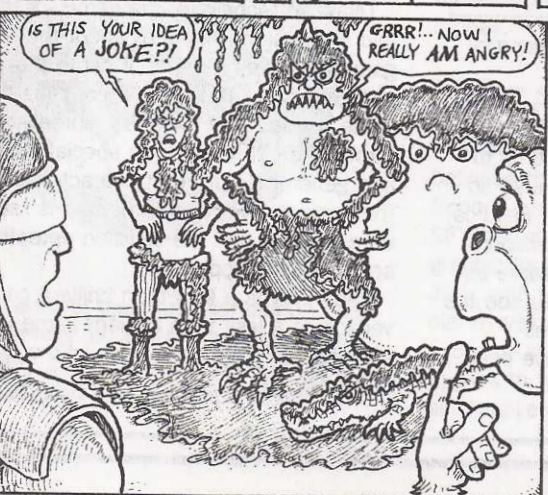
HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?!

QUICK, SUMO GORILLA... GET BACK INTO THE CONSOLE BEFORE HE SEES US!



SPLAT!

OH NO! IT'S GONE ALL OVER MY CONSOLE!... LET'S HOPE NONE WENT INSIDE...



IS THIS YOUR IDEA OF A JOKE?!

GRRR!... NOW I REALLY AM ANGRY!



OH! COME BACK HERE!

YOU BIG THICK APE!... PUFF!... PANT!... PERHAPS YOU COULD APPLY YOUR INTELLIGENCE AND SKILL TO PACIFYING THIS VIOLENTLY DISPOSED CROWD OF KETCHUP-COVERED CONSOLE CHARACTERS...

BEAT 'EM UPS ROUND UP

FATAL FURY SUPER FAMICOM BY TAKARA



Dan: First let's consider the original Neo Geo version of this game. Fatal Fury is a Street Fighter II clone which was released very much on the back of SFII's popularity and, as such, seemed to be a great game (even to the point of one pillock writing to EB saying that SFII doesn't even come close to Fatal Fury!)

However once the game had been around for a month or two everyone realised what a poor clone it actually was — completely lacking in depth and lasting interest. The two player mode is rubbish — so for that matter are the special attacks, unintelligent computer opponents, lack of selectable fighters and illogical moves (Duck King's jumping kick to name just one).

Secondly let's consider the differences between the Neo Geo and the Super Famicom and the chances of an accurate conversion. Although the NG has considerably better video hardware, Fatal Fury doesn't really exploit these. The SF's low res mode has the same vertical resolution as the NG — the horizontal res is about 20% less. The graphics could therefore have been directly ported with only a slight increase in the width of the



THE DIFFERENT BONUS STAGE...SOME THAT IS LOBBING TYRES AT YOU

fighters (about 5mm).

Although the NG can display 4,096 colours on-screen, Fatal Fury seems to be using only 200-300 at the most, so the SF version should be almost identical colourwise. That's why the SF version should look almost exactly the same as the NG version. Indeed when you see the game, you will realise that it does (although the colours should have been better).

The Neo Geo version doesn't make much use of the machine's video hardware in other ways. There aren't a great numbers of sprites displayed and the scaling is only used when the players move in and out of the screen. As a result the SF version moves very similarly but the players remain on the same plane — with none of that jumping about



malarky. I'm quite glad really, it was pointless (and no, the SF can't do it in mode 7 — it only manipulates one of the playfields, remember, not the sprites).

As for audio, the SF version should — if enough time had been taken — sound extremely similar to the NG version. Sadly it does not. The tunes aren't bad representations of the NG version but they could have been better. Some of the samples sound very similar, but many of them are awful (particularly Andy's charging elbow). Although high quality samples require a lot of memory, the use of compaction and leaving out some of the less important noises should have produced a game that sounded very much like the original. It did not.

Okay, so technically the game's not a bad conversion. But what about the gameplay? Well it's a poor game that's just got worse. The new FF contains the same unintelligent enemies, unrealistic throws, stupid reliance on special moves and general tedium that characterised the original. The control method is rather unresponsive and the collision detection seems slightly ropey.

Fatal Fury is a less than brilliant conversion of a less than brilliant game and so, when all's said and done, it's a waste of money.



Marc: I think Takara should think very carefully before releasing their next Neo Geo conversion as there is a fundamental problem. Most of the Neo Geo's games are worthless or very sub-standard titles tarted up by using huge amounts of cartridge memory (Ooops! Sorry Neo Geo owners — I'm sure your machine's lovely really!!).

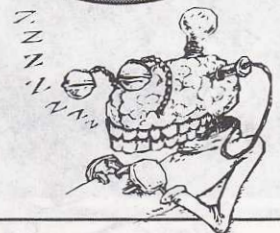
King of the Monsters was very shallow and boring. Fatal Fury is just a jumped up Street Fighter II with different characters. To be fair, Fatal Fury on the Neo Geo wasn't bad at all and a viable alternative to SFII on the SF — even if it did use 52 megabits!!

So how does it compare on just 12 megabits? Well, surprisingly enough, not too badly. Graphics are fairly similar — less colours and frames of animation, of course, but a pretty good effort given the limitations of the machine.

Music and sound effects are a let down. I didn't expect all the tunes of the original but those that have made it across are very grating — no wonder I had to reach for the old volume control before too long!

SF II is the benchmark of any beat 'em up on the Super Famicom; Fatal Fury is a lot slower and less varied than Capcom's game. Seen side-by-side, I can't see anyone choosing Fatal Fury over SF II. And given that most people have SF II by now, I don't really see anything here to warrant buying Fatal Fury as well.

Verdict: better than most of the rest, but not as good as the best!



BRASS BOSS SUPER FAMICOM BY TELENET



Dan: Brass Boss is... let me see, how can I put this? Errrrrr... oh yes! Brass Boss is a Street Fighter II clone! Yes!

The two player game is basically exactly like SFII. You know, two characters beat each other up, best of three rounds, much wailing and gnashing of teeth, etc.

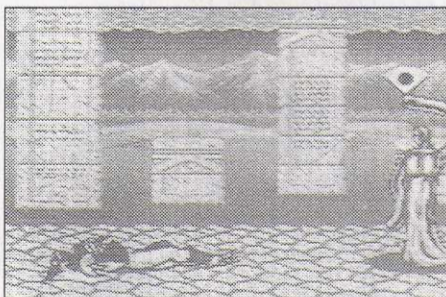
The one player game is also very SFII-esque. Here you must defeat the other characters (though you can pick the order in which you punish them); after each character is defeated a certain amount of points are earned which can be used to beef up your character. Then you have to overcome a shadow version of yourself, followed by the many armed Ashura — so called because he can complete the tricky Ashura Blasters without losing a life.

Finally you confront the last boss, who must be vanquished in order to save the galaxy (or whatever — the text is all in Japanese and these story lines are always a loud of b***** really, aren't they?).

So it seems this game is just another crappy SF II clone riding on the crest of SF II's wave of popularity. Brass Boss is

nothing but a pale clone of Capcom's game and falls short of the original in every way.

Graphically the game is very average; the small, poorly coloured sprites have very few frames of animation and the backdrops are instantly forgettable. Sound is also very average with ineffective spot FX and mostly boring tunes. Gameplay (again) is rather poor. The fighters have very few moves and the collision detection is flawed, as it is



sometimes possible for an opponent to walk straight through one of your attacks. The fighting action is very uninspiring and so, not surprisingly, we tired of this game after only a few rounds (after I kept beating Dan with the liquid

alien creature!! Ed.).

The only positive thing I can say about BB is that there are a few imaginative elements. The liquid creature (very T1000ish) is quite interesting, as he can form his body into spikes, blades and so on. The throw moves are also quite innovative. And that's it! I really can't think of much else to say. Indeed, I feel the urge for a little more parentheses (Ah, that's so much better! I always feel much more at ease when my words are safely encapsulated by brackets! A friend tells me this is the sign of poor writing style, but what does he know, eh? Anyway this review is just about long enough now, so I think I'll close these brackets).

Don't buy Brass Boss.

SCORE

Video	50%
Audio	60%
Playability	65%
Lastability	25%

45%

POWER ATHLETE SUPER FAMICOM BY KANEKO



Dan: Power Athlete is the latest in a long line of lame Street Fighter clones. Why do companies bother? Well, I suppose the obvious answer is that (as

Jason pointed out in his Golden Fighter review) anything looking like SFII is bound to sell well. To be honest, I'll be amazed if people keep buying these games.



ERM...FIST AGAINST SHARP BLADE..FAR? NA!

If SFII had not been released, games like Power Athlete would not seem so bad — but as it has, they do! Even

Ranma has not been played by us since SFII's release. It just makes similar games obsolete.

SCORE

Video	78%
Audio	75%
Playability	70%
Lastability	50%

60%

So, what of this particular clone? Well the graphics are nicely drawn and initially look very attractive. They don't move well, however, and the frame rate seems a lit-

tle low. Sound also seems nice at first, but this too proves limited.

The one new feature this game boasts is movement in two planes. While this seems interesting at first, it soon proves to be a pointless addition — particularly as it adds a lack of precision to the fighting. But the thing that really skews Power Athlete through the plums is the fact that each character has only seven moves. This completely ruins any chances of developing interesting tactics — and makes Power Athlete a waste of time and money.

MEGA DRIVE VERSION

There are hardly any differences between the Mega Drive version and the Super Famicom game, apart from the SF's better sampled sound effects and graphic touches. The game plays identically, with the same characters and special moves.

So my scorecard for the SF version applies to the MD version too. My verdict also applies!

ALIENS VS PREDATOR SUPER FAMICOM BY ACTIVISION



Onn: The year is 2493 and Shanghai has been over-run by Aliens who are killing mankind. Nothing can stop them... well, not until the Predator hears a distress call from his satellite and comes down to Earth for a spot of hunting!! At least I think that's what the Japanese text says.

This game's another in the line of Final Fight games. As the Predator you have to wander through each stage, taking out all the evil Aliens by punching them, kicking them or using various objects to throw at the beasts. Occasionally, you can gain extra useful energy items which turn the Predator invisible or charge up his gun.

He must fight his way to the end of each stage and then dispose of the rather larger and nastier Alien mother.

From the initial screen shots of this game, things looked promising — especially when you consider what the Predator can offer against those acid, double jawed creatures. But in fact this game turns out to be just another poor beat 'em up. The Aliens are also very boring — apart from the fast little running beasts that can only

be disposed off by sliding them (a pain in the canine). Most of them look the same, with only slight colour differences and actions — some jumping, some spitting acid, some trying to claw you to death and so on.

The backdrops are very nice and detailed, but the sprites look out of place on them. Sound is also very boring — short tunes that repeat, some very Turtles like — not the sort of thing you'd associate with Aliens and Predator.

All the levels are very much the same but with different backdrops so the game becomes very repetitive. Definitely one to avoid!!

SCORE

Video	60%
Audio	40%
Playability	40%
Lastability	30%

40%

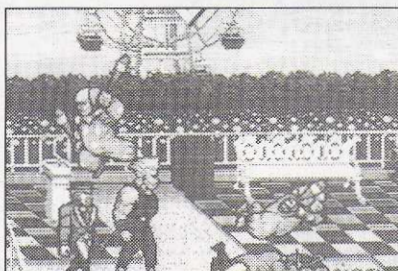
THE COMBATRIBES SUPER FAMICOM BY TECHNOS



Onn: Here we go again, another Final Fight style beat 'em up.

Combatribes can be played by one or two people — and I certainly recommend the two player game, as it's tough on your own. This is because

in the single player game there are always four opponents around



you, all constantly attacking you. The game does have some brilliant moves, including one in which you

grab two guys by the scruff of their necks and head bang them together. You also have the ability to pound opponents when they are down on the floor, as in the excellent Vendetta.

However, apart from these fun moves, Combatribes has limitations. For example there's no jump button, although you can "hop" if you run first. The graphics are very cartoon like, with neat backdrops, nice and colourful. But the sprites of the characters are short and stubby — a sort of SD Final Fight, so long range punching or kicking is out! Sound is OK — but nothing you would start tapping your foot to.

All in all Combatribes is an average beat 'em up, nowhere near the quality of Final Fight, or Super Double Dragon for that matter. And it's not really worth getting if you can get those two.

SCORE

Video	70%
Audio	60%
Playability	60%
Lastability	50%

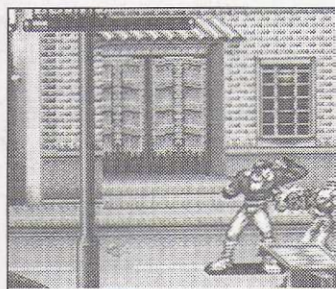
60%

RUSHING BEAT RUN SUPER FAMICOM JALECO



Marc: The original Rushing Beat was dismissed a bit of a duffer by most mags (Aaaah! It wasn't THAT bad!!); now for some reason Jaleco have released a sequel.

So what's the difference? I ha



EAT MY ELBOW

say: not a lot!

Basically, Jaleco have grabbed the first game, torted it up a tad and released it.

The graphics are improved (although they're STILL not as good as Final Fight's) and the slow down problem is slightly less in evidence, but the gameplay is still totally uninspired.

There are some nice bits in this new version — the large helicopter that flies up from behind the bridge is quite impressive, but we've most likely seen it all before, and better.

The two player mode is welcome (quite a rarity on the SF) but doesn't add all that much long term interest to the basic game.

Rushing Beat Run is just another beat 'em up and one that only real die-hard fans of the genre should bother looking at.

SCORE

Video	80%
Audio	82%
Playability	75%
Lastability	60%

70%

RANMA 1/2 PART 2 SUPER FAMICOM BY NCS

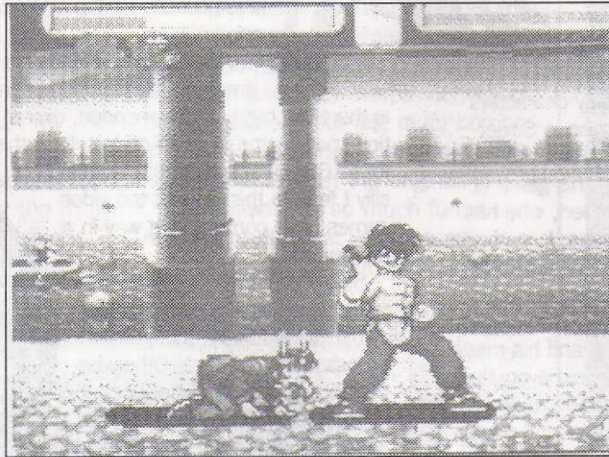


Onn: This game is a slight improvement on the original. In fact, you could call it Ranma 1/2 Championship Ω Edition, as the only difference is that there are now more fighters to control, all with different moves.

The game is now in standard low resolution mode, instead of the mode 7 flicker job of the original. In low-res the game looks very good indeed — bright and colourful, with detailed backdrops and cartoon sprites, which animate pretty well if not perfectly.

There are now twice as many characters to choose from if you want to fight it out in a two player game; this number is reduced in a one player versus the computer game. Like Fire Pro Wrestling, the game has a two player team match too, in which each player picks a squad of fighters. Then the winner is the player that wins the most matches. Another improvement over the original is the ability to push up to jump, as in SF II. This is heaven to us, as having to press a button to jump is very irritating!

Unfortunately the game's playability hasn't changed for the better. In a one player game you can quite easily beat the computer opponents just by sweeping them, although this is more difficult in the hardest RED mode. The game still suffers from bad collision detection and its rather ridiculous throws. And the special moves are a lot harder to perform. Each character has around 2-3 such moves; one is



easy to do — just press both buttons. The others are more difficult, requiring you to hold down button B and (at the same time) release B while pressing either DOWN or FORWARD. Timing is quite tricky, making the use of such combinations almost impossible!

Like the original, most of the characters are totally weird and have strange special moves. There's a girl armed with a spade who can throw trowels! And a giant panda that can belly flop you!

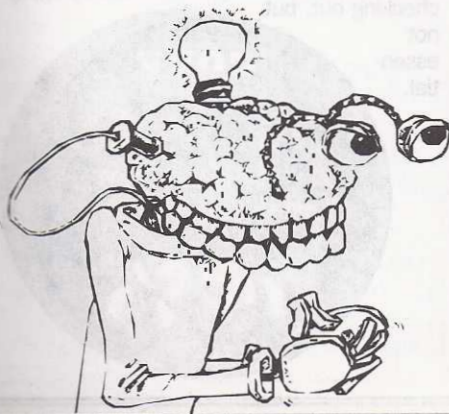
Ranma 1/2 Part 2 is a bit of a disappointment. It can't begin to compare to Capcom's Street Fighter II in sheer playability. If you didn't think much of the original, you won't find the sequel any better. It's worth a look, but that's about all.

Save yer money and wait for the Anime instead!

SCORE

Video	80%
Audio	70%
Playability	75%
Lastability	70%

75%



JUST THINK WHAT YOU COULD DO WITH £2! How about a champagne weekend in Paris? Or a flashy new sports car? Or maybe just a vinyl copy of the latest Rolf Harris single? Well... £2 is what you save when you buy an annual subscription to Electric Brain. See page 9 and you could be on your way to fulfilling your dream

CHAKAN - THE FOREVER MAN MEGA DRIVE BY SEGA



Dan: What's this, an American game? As games from the US are nearly always awful, is Chakan any better?

This game is another Sega platform adventure. As Chakan you must get through each of the levels, slice and chop evil creatures, negotiate platforms, collect potions, etc.

First impressions are very good. The SEGA logo at the start turns orange, accompanied by a sampled scream. Not bad. The title screen music is surprisingly listenable for an American game, with an unusual sound and nice percussion. There's a neatly presented intro, with Chakan telling of his fight with Death. Everything's looking good so far.

Start the game and you see that the in-game graphics are quite nice as well. The Chakan sprite is good (although his big floppy hat looks a bit daft) and the way he moves his swords around is great. The backdrops aren't bad either, though the shading is a trifle grainy.

The problem with Chakan is the gameplay. It lacks that certain something that makes a great game — in fact it's a little dull. There's nothing wrong with the control method — indeed you have a good degree of control over Chakan. The big problem is that the basic game design and level design are very, very average. It boils down to a potion collect-em-up and the enemies you encounter are very uninspired.

Some people might enjoy Chakan, but I'm not over impressed. Verdict: average.

SCORE

Video	70%
Audio	70%
Playability	60%
Lastability	50%

60%

ART OF FIGHTING NEO GEO BY SNK - 104 MEGS



Dan: 104 megs — that's a lot of memory. A hell of a lot for a video game, particularly when you consider that a mere six or seven years ago most people were playing on C64s and ZX Spectrums with less than one hundredth as much memory. You can see just how far video games have come.

The same is true in an audio-visual sense. Art of Fighting's graphics are absolutely incredible and knock most arcade PCB games for six. The characters are huge and almost fill the screen when they are full size. I say "full size" because the game uses the Neo Geo's scaling abilities to zoom in and out depending on the distances between fighters. Though this effect looks strange at first



it is actually very effective; it means the game can display characters over twice the height of those in Street Fighter II, while still allowing them to move far apart. The animation in this game is superb — especially on Robert, who has some extremely stylish moves. In particular look out for his strong kick. When Robert KO's his opponent with this move and everything slows down (a la SFII) you can clearly see his arms circling and his medalion swaying — a joy to behold every time.

Sound is also incredible. The music is brilliant, with superb sampled guitars, pianos, drums, etc. and some groovy synths. Listen out for the extremely effective stereo panning, which is used really well. As usual for a Neo Geo game, there is a



huge quantity of perfectly sampled speech. From the demo mode speech to the intermission speeches, the dialogue accompanying special attacks (like John's "You've got spots!" move), the taunts ("You wanna fight, boy?") and the victory phrases ("Get out of my way, Kid!") is always amazing.

So the game is several orders of magnitude above SFII technically. But what about the gameplay? Well, at first things don't seem too great: it doesn't flow as well as SFII and the moves seem a little strange. But once you adjust to the differences Art of Fighting is fun and extremely playable. It even improves on SFII in a couple ways: for example you can punch fireballs.

Even so, to my mind Art of Fighting is overall not as playable as SFII. This is largely due to one or two small gameplay niggles, such as an unfathomable (and unfair) dizzying system and some overly powerful attacks (it is possible for the last opponent to kill you with just one hit!).

Verdict: Art of Fighting is graphically beautiful, so amazing, excellently presented and extremely playable. It is therefore highly recommended, except for one tiny or rather not tiny snag — the price. AoF is sold in this country for £165+ which is getting a little silly I feel. In this respect too video games have come a long way in a few years!

Still, if you're fortunate enough to be an oil tycoon or a member of the Royal Family, this game is an essential purchase. Otherwise try robbing your local NatWest. Alternatively get the next issue of EB, which will include a free copy of Art of Fighting on the cover (or my name isn't Robert Maxwell — Ed.).

SCORE

Video	93%
Audio	94%
Playability	92%
Lastability	85%

92%

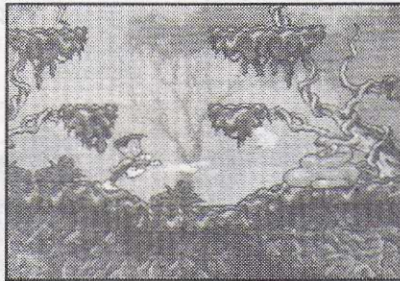
GLOBAL GLADIATORS MEGA DRIVE BY VIRGIN



Onn: I previewed this game in EB a couple of issues ago and raved on about how good it seemed. So how does the full version compare now that Virgin has released it?

Well, for those who haven't a clue what the game is about... Mick and Mack are two kids who are hamburger junkies. They pop into McDonalds to get their daily dose when who should be there waiting for them? Only Ronald McDonald himself! WOW!! After seeing the clown on the TV, posters, packaging, etc. he has finally appeared at the kids' local

Unfortunately in this game Ronald doesn't seem to be the nice fun dude everyone thinks he is — must have been hanging around with that Hamburgler chappie! Anyway, Ronald teleports the twosome to other parts of the earth that have been taken over by slime, as well as various non-environmentally-friendly machines and



creatures. Armed with pump action anti-slime power guns (free with any Big Mac Meal and cherry pie), the kids must collect a number of lost McDonald logos scattered on each of several levels before they can escape.

The game is very much like Sonic the Hedgehog: run as fast as possible from left to right collecting logos within the time limit while avoiding (or shooting) the nasty creatures. In all there are four levels (Slime World, Forest, Toxistown and the Arctic), each split into three sections.

Global Gladiators is great fun to play. The animation of Mick/Mack is fabulous, especially when using the gun — they shut their eyes tight and the kick of each shot sends them reeling backwards on their heels! Each stage has great backdrops and the parallax scrolling is fast and smooth. Sound is not forgotten either; it features some really hip funky tunes, with fabulous samples... "Yeah!",

"Cool!" and "Awesome!".

In terms of gameplay it's also very Sonic, but here you can blast the nasty with your gun — good fun. The game is only let down by its lack of variety from level to level, with samey platforms and creatures — plus, there aren't any bosses to defeat either. That's why it takes no time at all to complete the game, especially with so many extra lives gained at each level.

All in all, Global Gladiators is a neat game — highly enjoyable the first few times you play it. But after a while it's very disappointing. Had Virgin added a boss at the end of each stage or a few puzzles to solve, then "I'd definitely buy the game". As it is, it's pretty average. Well, checking out, but not essential.

SCORE

Video	90%
Audio	90%
Playability	80%
Lastability	70%

75%

BOMBERMAN '93

PC ENGINE BY HUDSON SOFT



Dan: We'd been eagerly awaiting the release of this sequel to one of our all time favourite games and — incredibly — it's even

better. For those of you who haven't played the original Bomberman, it's basically a maze game in which you plant bombs to eradicate your adversaries and collect various powerups. The one player game is dreadfully boring, but the 2-5 player battle game is indescribably brilliant — mainly because of the huge amount of tactics available. That in itself isn't an adequate description; the game has to be played to be fully appreciated.

Bomberman '93 is basically the same game with a few new additions. There are now eight screen layouts, all with their own features, like teleports, conveyors, one way doors, etc. There are new weapons — such as bomb kick (really great!) and a multi bomb layer (handy). You also have new powers — short fuse bombs, slow down (hilarious when used in conjunction with conveyor belts) and position swaps. All these new additions really add a lot to an already brilliant game.

Although this may seem like a shortish review for what is undoubtedly one of the best games ever, what more can I say? The graphics are cutesy, adequate and otherwise nondescript. So is the sound. But the gameplay is truly, madly, deeply brilliant. If you have the necessary hardware (and a few friends) this is an essential purchase. If you haven't, acquire hardware and friends and then buy the game.

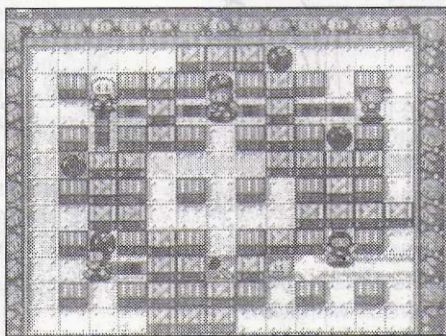


Onn: Well, what can I say about this sequel to the most fun multi-player game available? Terrific! Brilliant!

Fandabbidosy! Superb!

The graphics and sound maybe rather average and the single player game is quite boring after a few goes (and easy to complete), but it's the sheer playability and fun factor of the multi-player battle games that really makes Bomberman the business. Now with additional warps, conveyors, power ups, kick bombs, multi bombs and skull infections, Bomberman '93 is even better than the original.

One reason it's so much fun is the number of different ways you can take out the opponent each time you play the game...



FIVE PLAYER MAYHEM IN THE NEW BOMBERMAN '93. MORE MAZES, MORE WEAPONS, MORE BOMBS, MORE SKILLS...AND MORE FUN!!

not to mention the different ways you can kill yourself each time! The extra bomb kicks

also add a further dimension to the game: you can be fighting it out with someone in one half of the screen, when suddenly a bomb slides in from the other side. Bomberman '93 is fabulous — it's had us literally bursting with laughter each time we play it!!

Engine owners everywhere should rush out and get this immediately.

SCORE

Video	60%
Audio	62%
Playability	96%
Lastability	97%

97%

SCORE

Video	70%
Audio	70%
Playability	97%
Lastability	96%

97%

THIS MONTH'S CELEBRITY PROFILE

NAME: Onn "The Editor" Lee

AGE: 25

DAY JOB: Works in father's Chinese take away

FAVOURITE CONSOLE GAMES:

SF: Street Fighter II, Mario Kart

MD: Streets of Rage II, The Super Shinobi, Devil Crash

Engine: R-Type, Super Darius, Bomberman '93, Gate of Thunder, World Court Tennis, Parodius

GB: Tetris

FAVOURITE COIN-OPS: Gauntlet with 4 people playing and a sack of money, Dragon's Lair, Darius, Darius II — but prefers pintables, the best being: Addams Family, Dr. Who and White Water

FAVOURITE GAME MUSIC: Streets of Rage, Konami Music, almost anything by Yuzo Koshiro and early Robb Hubbard (Knuckle Buster on C64)

FAVORITE NON-GAME MUSIC: Nothing particular... "Wacko Jacko is probably my fave but I like anything — rock, pop, soul, dance and even rap, if funny like Tone Loc. I hate "repeated" rave stuff."

FAVOURITE FILMS: Anything by Spielberg, T2, Aliens, My Cousin Vinny and anything with Harrison Ford in. Plus a number of Chinese Martial Arts films

FAVOURITE TV PROGRAMMES: Hates soaps and any ITV "prime time" TV. Current faves: Tomorrow's World, 60 Minutes (shame it comes on around 3am), Noel's House Party and CBBC presenters' slot... Ed the Duck rules!!!

LIKES: Playing games, shopping, reading other publishers' console mags (to see how c*** they are), most sports when actually getting round to playing them and eating

DISLIKES: Great looking games that turn out to be s*****, Amiga dying all the time, lack of good console shops in Nottingham, inability to read Japanese

GREATEST AMBITION: to win the football pools... "even if it's only 5p, although a million would be nice"

GREATEST PERSONAL QUALITY: "I'm good at keeping secrets, so bog off!!"

FAVOURITE FRUIT/VEGETABLE: Tomato — "I eat at least one every week. It's also a fruit that looks more like a vegetable and makes a great missile!"

DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH'S IN-DEPTH CELEBRITY PROFILE — A WORLD EXCLUSIVE IN EB 34

1993: THE MACHINE AGE!

Onn Lee gazes into his crystal ball to see what lies ahead in the coming months — although large amounts of dust occasionally obscure his view!

APRIL

As April arrives Mega Drive owners everywhere are hoping to see a glimpse of Sega's much talked about conversion of Street Fighter II - Championship Edition. As we rushed to the printers there still wasn't any sign of the game — even though all major magazines apart from EB insist it will be available.

Sega of Japan releases its six button joypad. It's bundled with an "easy touch typing with the Sega 6B joypad" cartridge.



SURELY WE'VE SEEN THE LAST OF JOHN MADDEN?

Sunsoft announces it will convert Lemmings II for all consoles and assures us it will be a simultaneous release with the Amiga version.

MAY

Screen shots of Street Fighter II - Championship Edition for the Mega Drive appear in other major console magazines — but it seems they were really Super Famicom pictures mucked about with Datel's Action Replay.

Electronic Arts announces six new titles for the Mega Drive for the coming months: John Madden Football Mid '93, Road Rash III (Smoother Scroll Edition), Bulls vs The Scumthorpe Disco Bouncers Basketball Team, PGA Tour Golf 3, Summer EA Outdoor Hockey and Nuke That Sad Dam (a 3D isometric helicopter

dam busting game in the Gulf). What these games are like is as yet unknown.

Nintendo and Sega go to war! Nintendo drops the worldwide price of the Super NES to \$10 — but with no game, no power supply, one pad and the rest of the machine in kit form. Sega's Genesis is a dollar cheaper but with the original Sonic game on ROM inside the machine! Meanwhile in the UK prices stay as they are!

Dragon Quest VI hits the Streets of Japan. One of the first shops to stock it, Hedidashita Camera, reports queues of 50,000 people lining up outside. Within a matter of minutes, all 40,000 copies of the game are sold; 60,000 muggings are reported the same day.

Capcom announces Street Fighter II - The Fuel Injection version will hit the arcades the following month. Insiders who have managed to lay their hands on the machine say it's faster than the Turbo edition and all the characters are now evenly balanced, as the energy bars never go down!

JUNE

Atari announces the launch of the Jaguar, unless some technical hitch occurs.

NEC launches the new PC Engine. It looks like the old Engine, plays all the old Engine games on card and CD — and is in fact the same old PC Engine.

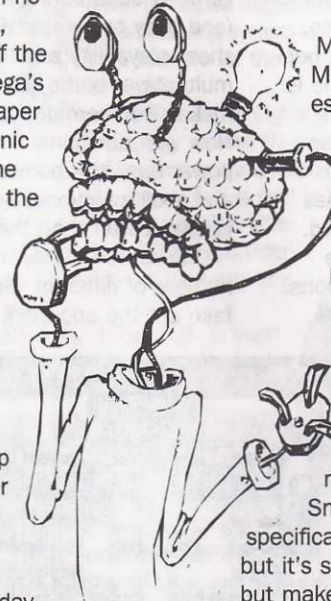
The Super Mario Movie starring Bob Hoskins hits cinemas everywhere. Barry Norman slags it off totally but it's a complete success, breaking all box office records. Also Sega gets one up on Nintendo by acquiring full rights to the film. Super Mario - The Movie - The Game is released on the Mega Drive and other machines... but not on Nintendo!!

JULY

Atari says there are some technical difficulties... and the launch of the Jaguar has been postponed.

A man is spotted buying a Mini Disk at the Birmingham Mega Store. This event stands as the new music medium of the future! Mini Disk becomes VHS of recordable digital music. Philips is very upset. Amstrad re-enters the console market with the Amstrad Fabbo GX2000, the User Friendly Video Games Console. It's totally compatible with the older GX4000 and if you can use it within 10 minutes you can return it for a full refund.

Nintendo announces the new "Jim Bowen-Super-Smashing-Terrific-FX2Ω" chip. Specifications of the chip are unknown but it's said to do just about everything but make the tea. Unfortunately it's so advanced no one knows what to do with it.



STREET FIGHTER II CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION.. WILL IT EVER COME FOR THE SEGA MEGA DRIVE? OH YES IT WILL!... OH NO IT WON'T! HERE IN THIS PICCY.. VEGA FIGHTS THE CHEATING SCUM M. BISO... IF YOU'RE JAPANESE BALROG VS VEGA!!

Capcom releases Street Fighter II - Virtual Reality version. Unfortunately after only one day it is shelved, after five people are electrocuted while playing the game of Blanka. . .

AUGUST

One month on and Amstrad has sold five thousand Fabbo GX2000s. All but one have been returned. Production of

the Fabbo GX2000 ceases. The tabloid papers go crazy, revealing long lens photos and transcripts of telephone recordings of different members of the Royal Family, suggesting they own the only non-returned Fabbo GX2000.

Rumours arise that Street Fighter III will appear soon. More rumour has it that it



THE DSP CHIP... MORE CHIPS TO COME IN '93?

will be converted to the Mega Drive and use the 6B Joypad.

Code Masters release the "all-in-one NES game controller cartridge". The cartridge (the same size as a standard NES title with sockets,

joypad and buttons)

doesn't require a NES to play the game. Just plug the the device into your TV and away you go! All for £5. Nintendo files a court injunction to stop its sale.

Meanwhile in Japan Nintendo shows a prototype of the all new Super Famicom CD-ROM unit. But after initial doubts it postpones the launch until Christmas.

SEPTEMBER

Jeff Minter of Llamasoft releases his first Gameboy title. GB-Colourspace is available exclusively from selected branches of Woolworths.

As TV's Tomorrow's World ends another series, the Beeb announces a new computer show to fill the slot. Producer of "Mega Bits", Mario Lomborghini, says it will make other computer programmes pale in comparison. However critics have their misgivings about the two presenters: Ed the Duck and Gordon the Gofer. Mr Lomborghini points out that they are easier to understand than the presenters of Bad Influence.

Electric Brain exclusively reveals the identity of the only non-returned Amstrad Fabbo GX2000 to be train spotter extraordinaire, clown prince and occasional prime minister, John Major.

What have the following people got in common... President Bill Clinton, Dr Bhoutros Bhoutros Bhoutros Ghali, The Pope, Mother Teresa, Boris Yeltsin and The Queen? That's right — they all subscribe to Electric Brain. If you'd like to be a subscriber — and save yourself two quid on the shop price — see page 9 (Are you sure this list is strictly accurate? Ed.)

OCTOBER

The 20meg card version of Fighting Street II appears for the PC Engine. Costing £100 in Japan, it sells in the UK for around £150 — with a certain shop in Nottingham charging £200. An optional adapter is available to let you connect Sega's 6B Joypad to the PC Engine!

Capcom releases Street Fighter III in coin-op form. The game features 30 different fighters and an 18-button joystick. Capcom's PR man states: "every possible move can be performed with this configuration... some I cannot mention here!"

The Nintendo vs Code Masters case of the "all-in-one NES game controller cartridge" is won by Code Masters. The judge dismisses the case, stating "...the NES is such a c*** piece of kit, no one in their right mind would buy one anyway."

NOVEMBER

Sega announces an 18-button joypad, the 18B, for release the following month. Mean Machines Sega announces a scoop with the Mega Drive conversion of Street Fighter III from Capcom — but Sega is saying nothing.

After reporting massive losses, IBM launches its own video games console. The machine will come in different forms with optional extras: graphic board, sound board, joystick adapters, super VGA monitor, etc.

Atari announces that the Jaguar will now become a hand held, although they are having trouble with power consumption. Taking four PP3 batteries, the machine can only be played for five minutes. After a hostile reaction, Atari says it will postpone sales until plutonium is easily available over the counter.

Sony announces its new photo system — the Sony Photo Betamax. Take pictures with your normal camera, take the film to any Sony Centre and

they will put your photos on Betamax video

tapes which can be viewed on your Betamax video recorder. No Betamax player? You can buy one from the Sony Centre... very cheap!

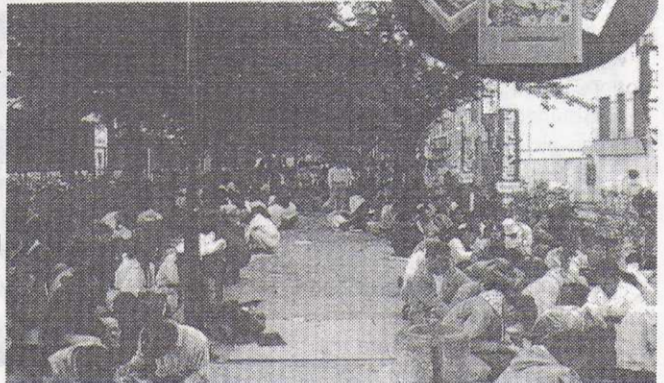
DECEMBER

Santa announces Christmas presents have been postponed after receiving too many requests for a 32-bit machine. Instead he offers all lucky kiddies around the world the chance to get one of 50,000 Amstrad Fabbo GX2000s.

Sir Clive Sinclair releases the world's first pedal-powered games console, The Sinclair Spectrum C5.

Street Fighter II - Championship Edition finally appears on the Mega Drive. It's a perfect copy of the coin-op, but is only a single player game!

Auditions begin for the



THE QUEUES FOR DRAGON QUEST V - WAIT FOR DRAGON QUEST VI..THE QUEUES WILL BE LONGER

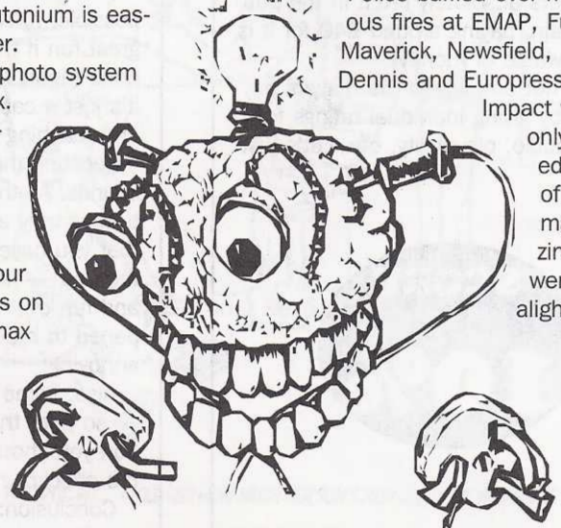
part of "Sonic" in Sonic the Hedgehog - The Movie.

So if you are blue, spiky, run very fast, good at sticking your fingers up and generally look like a hedgehog... contact your local mental hospital for admittance.

Electric Brain becomes the biggest selling games console magazine in the UK.

Police baffled over mysterious fires at EMAP, Future, Maverick, Newsfield, Dennis and Europress

Impact where only latest editions of their magazines were set alight.



SUPER BOXXLE SUPER FAMICOM BY PACK-IN-VIDEO



Onn: WOW! Look at the fabulous mode 7, 128 colour, multi-parallax scrolling graphics with awesome full stereo surround sound and totally out and out playability — all of which you won't find in this game!

What is Super Boxxle anyway? Is it a beat 'em up? NO! Is it a shoot 'em up? NO!! Is it Henry, the Mild Mannered Janitor? NO!!! Super Boxxle IS Sokoban. Aaarrghhh!

YES!! Super Boxxle is the simple puzzle game of pushing boxes in a maze on to spots. So what else can I say? You want more?

Well the game features three options:

1. Standard one player game. Here you can pick from a couple of hundred puzzles to solve. Of course they start off fairly easy and progress to "My name is Mr Spock and I can't solve this even if you give me a year to do it" level. The graphics and sound in this mode are fairly basic.
2. Two player mode. Here the screen is split in two and each player has to solve the same puzzle in the quickest time. First to do it wins a cup. Win three to become champ! The graphics are smaller than in the one player game — still very, very basic.

3. This is the Sokoban construction kit. But why anyone would try to design their own puzzle is beyond me!

So there you have it. Considering you can get versions of Sokoban for computers absolutely FREE in the public domain, paying around £40 for it is a total waste of money!!

Let's not embarrass the makers any further by giving individual ratings for video, audio, playability, etc. Let's just say...



THE KING OF RALLY SUPER FAMICOM BY MELDAC



Marc: When I first saw screen shots of this game I thought it had a lot of potential — a racing game with a behind-the-vehicle mode 7 viewpoint certainly looked promising.

Now I've had the dubious pleasure of playing King of Rally, I see why the F-Zero/Mario Kart format is more widely used!

The game is basically a jeep/truck racing simulation with an unusual above and behind viewpoint. All the course graphics are handled in mode 7 and are naturally fairly smooth.

There are two main problems. The first is speed (or the lack of it!): the whole game is played at a pedestrian pace. You could almost fall asleep for five minutes and not miss much! Secondly, the viewpoint doesn't work very well at all. For example, corners come up without you seeing them because most of the time they're off the screen — before you know it, you're completely off



course and stuck somewhere.

Also, you can actually drive towards the screen! This is an extremely weird effect, unlike that in any other racing game, and it puts you completely out of control! Your brain wonders what to do and you oversteer wildly, while at the same time trying to push the pad in the right direction. Then suddenly you're driving back into the screen and you're OK again. This is all very off-putting and doesn't make King of Rally much fun to play.

The overall presentation isn't at all bad, but sadly the viewpoint and control just don't work and the pace is just too slow to warrant a purchase.



Onn: Considering the first rally game for the SF was Jaleco's Big Run (which was the pits), it's quite a challenge for anyone to produce another rally game that's worse. With King of Rally, Meldac have come close!

The first thing that catches your eye when you start to play the game is its pretty amazing 3D, mode 7 graphics. The game is viewed a bit like F-Zero but higher up. And instead of always being behind the car, your view always points in one direction. So when you turn, you actually see the car turn around instead of everything else rotating. This is a neat idea and, in my opinion, works well. But in fact it's the only thing that works well in this game!

As in other rally games, your object is to get from start to finish in the quickest time possible, hitting each of the checkpoints en route. Unfortunately, while this might be great fun if there were a host of other drivers racing against you, King of Rally has none (apart from the odd vehicle which usually heads in the opposite direction). So it's just a case of driving along the track, locating the checkpoints, running over them and reaching the end.

Locating the checkpoints is not as easy as it sounds. As the screen doesn't rotate, you sometimes turn sharply and miss them. And there is no warning that you have! So if you do miss one and you reach the end — nothing happens! You have to backtrack and run over the checkpoint you omitted. This happened to me (and Dan) a few times and is highly annoying.

Also, some of the stages have very poor graphics — so poor that you can't actually tell in which direction you should be going. Again this makes you miss the checkpoints.

Conclusion: Rally it may be, King it's definitely not.



JAKI CRUSH

SUPER FAMICOM BY NAXAT SOFT



Onn: Strangely enough, although the SF has been around for a couple of years there hasn't been a pinball game for it until now.

Jaki Crush is produced by Naxat soft, the creators of Alien Crush and Devil Crash (on Engine and MD), so you can expect something really special — and in many ways it is. The game follows the Devil Crash theme of a single, three-screen main table with a number of bonus single screen tables, accessed by hitting certain targets.

Like Devil Crash, the tables have a "devilish" Chinese look to them, featuring golden temples, demon heads, dragons, corpses and skeletons. The layout is pretty good, although nowhere near as good as that on Devil Crash — getting the ball from the bottom to the top is extremely difficult. The ball movement isn't too hot either — the gravity setting should definitely be increased! Occasionally the ball goes through the flippers too, but there is a multi-ball feature... Hooray!!!

The bonus tables are a bit of a mixed bag. Half of them are really boring, requiring you just to hit a number of objects. But the others are pretty good — especially one with a rotating wheel, which is pretty complicated and difficult to complete.

So is Jaki Crush worth getting? As it's the only pinball game for the SF, I would have to say "yes" — it IS very playable. It's not as good as the best video pintable, Devil Crash, but it comes a close second. It's also well ahead of its computer format rivals, namely the rather boring Pinball Fantasies (with kickbacks that don't kick and a ball that drifts). Hopefully people like Rare Design will now decide to convert some of the William's pintables to the SF, as they already have for the 8-bit NES.



Marc: Pinball is a strange game to play by any standards — knocking a ball around a table with flippers and collecting bonuses. It's also probably one of the hardest to recreate as a video game.

Naxat are probably the computer pinball experts, having created Alien Crush and Devil Crash on the PC Engine, both widely regarded as the definitive versions. This is their first version on the SF (indeed, THE



first pinball game on the machine) and it's going to take some beating in the future.

I must admit I'm not a great fan of pinball — normally it bores me after about 10 minutes. But Jaki Crush is so well done it did hold my interest longer than usual.

Graphics are well done with a dark effect similar to Devil Crash. There are also some great "Gothic" bits and pieces scattered around the table. The sub-levels (reached by the ball dropping down certain holes or by beating the bosses) are particularly nice, with some absolutely superb backdrops.

Music isn't too bad, although nothing special; it could have done with some hard rock to set the scene. Sound effects are above average — not particularly realistic but effective nonetheless.

If pinball is your thing, Jaki Crush will keep you well occupied for quite some time to come; it's certainly the best console version around. For the rest of us, I don't think any computer version is going to convert us to pinball, but Jaki Crush comes as close as we'll get.



SUPER SWIV

SUPER FAMICOM BY COCONUTS, JAPAN

Super SWIV is a conversion of one of the best vertical shoot 'em ups on the Amiga. In the game one or two players can fly a helicopter or drive an armoured jeep, taking out the enemy forces around the Bermuda triangle.

Whereas the Amiga version was based on one massive level, Super SWIV is split into several levels — all fairly long and each of them packed with enemy gun emplacements, tanks, helicopters, jets, mines, etc. Extra fire power comes in the form of green hangers dotted around each level; shooting them reveals weapon icons, including a flame thrower, plasma bolts and a wicked laser. The more icons of the same kind you collect, the more powerful the weapon

becomes. Additional weapons are also available in limited quantities. And occasionally a shield is available, which you can also shoot to act as a smart bomb. Get to the end of each level and you have to take out the

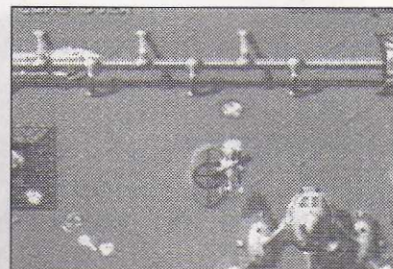


THE NICE TITLE SCREEN

boss craft/silo — this seems to require about a million shots before it kicks the bucket.

That's the basic idea. So what's the new Super SWIV like to play?

Read on for the full in-depth PhD level analysis from EB's Marc and Onn...



HERE YOU ARE CONTROLLING THE HELICOPTER...BUT WATCH OUT FOR THAT TRAIN



Marc: SWIV is possibly one of the best shoot 'em ups on the Amiga and so I was looking forward to the SF version — just to see what the programmers could do to improve upon it.

Well I'm glad to say that, although there haven't been any earth shattering changes (in fact very few!), they've done a decent job of porting it on to the SF.

There really isn't that much to SWIV. It's just a straightforward, vertical scrolling shoot 'em up with power ups, big end-of-level bosses and a two-player mode.

Hey! Hold on a minute... did I say a two player mode? On the SF? In that case it must slow down so badly, it's unplayable! Not this time — I'm happy to say that "the boys done good" and there is little or no slow down throughout the game. Great stuff!

Graphics are better than those on the Amiga version — much clearer, better defined, using more colours and quite a bit bigger. Nothing particularly jaw-dropping, but it's all well at home on the SF. Music is pretty good too. Hard rock style soundtracks complement each level well and, although a little quick to repeat, they leave nothing to complain about. Sound effects are nice and loud, with tons of explosions to spice the whole thing up.

Strangely enough, unlike the MD, the SF is quite short on decent shoot 'em ups. So SWIV is quite a welcome addition to the machine's library. Beware though, this game is no push-over — the difficulty is

cranked up quite high, almost from the very start.

In the vertical shoot 'em up stakes, there's only really Super Aleste to contend with SWIV. If I had to choose between them I'd go with Aleste. But if you've already got that game, SWIV is well worth checking out.

SCORE

Video	85%
Audio	86%
Playability	85%
Lastability	87%

88%



Onn: SWIV on the Amiga was a rather cool game. It rates as one of the best vertical shoot 'em ups around for the machine. The best thing about it is the brilliantly animated sprites — like rising UFOs that leave crop circles behind and 'copters that zoom forward, opening

their bay doors to drop bouncing bombs along the river. They are so good that, when I first got the game, I spent a good few hours using the pause button to watch the graphics. The original game did have one major flaw — it was a bit too difficult. Most of the enemies require at least a ton of shots to blow them up.

The SF version, Super SWIV (or Firepower 2000 on the SNES), is basically the same game but with all the levels changed and with different weapons. The game still features the option to choose between a helicopter or a tank. Of course you'd be a fool to pick the tank — not only because it's too dangerous to dodge all the enemy fire and obstacles, but it's also difficult to control!

The game is simple: head up screen and shoot everything that's shootable... which usually means everything!

Super SWIV looks very nice indeed but it has been scaled down considerably from the Amiga original. The new version is also not too difficult to complete. The graphics are now bigger and more colourful, but not as detailed or as varied as the Amiga's — they still look OK though.

As with the original, you still need a megaton of shots to destroy enemies, so it's a good job it has turbo-fire!! The game does feature a few new bits, like one level where your vehicle turns into a jet fighter in a super fast scrolling section.

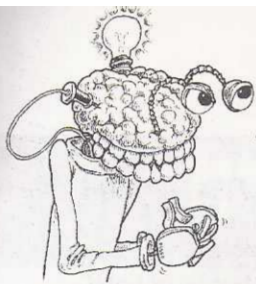
However in most respects Super SWIV doesn't really improve on the original. It's a fairly good vertical blaster, but lacks enough variety or special effects to show off what the SF can really do. The ending is also as bad as the Amiga version!

Bottom line: worth checking out, but I'd stick with the better horizontal blasters instead.

SCORE

Video	85%
Audio	80%
Playability	75%
Lastability	70%

77%



BRAIN MAIL

'Ere, what's all this then? Oh yeah... the letter's page. So you lot reading this should start writing in (unless you want idiots like this month's appearing again!). If you have anything to say — pointless, lateral, meaningful, spirited, malicious, opaque — or even interesting or funny — then get out your pen from your Thunderbirds pencil case and send us a letter.

We'll be paying £5 for each letter printed.

Brain Man, our resident... errr... just our resident, will do his best to answer. Or if he can't, he'll insult you instead! Write to:

BRAIN MAN'S AMAZING LETTERS PAGE
ELECTRIC BRAIN
SPACE CITY
77 BLYTHE ROAD
LONDON W14 0HP

p.s. Anyone sending in a letter with a decorated envelope will be nominated for the "I wasted many hours drawing on the envelope for no reason" prize — also known as the Twit of the Month Trophy (as EB doesn't nick naff ideas from EGM, unlike some magazines).

Dear Brain Man

I recently visited the US of A and was pleased to find that many games (I myself am a Nintendophile) are about 40% cheaper than over here. Are we being ripped off, or wot? Given that you can buy a cheap return seat to the Big Apple for around £199, you would only have to buy about £500 worth of software to break even on the trip — that's less than eight SFII's!! It may be lot for one person to spend. But how about EB readers clubbing together to form a bulk-buying syndicate? We pool our orders and send a regular rep stuffed with dosh on a return flight to buy our games.

Jeremy Watson
Loughton, Essex

Dear Jeremy

Sounds like a good idea. I volunteer

myself for the arduous task of making regular trips to NY on your behalf.

Dear Brain Man

Being one of those lucky enough to have been able to get EB for over a year on subscription, I remain disappointed about one aspect of your otherwise formidable publication — the fact that you don't give away lots of freebies like some other mags. Although I appreciate that for one quid you couldn't stretch to a disk or even a free Gameboy, but what about a limited edition signed photo of none other than your good self, Mr. Brain Man?

James Mulhall
London SW6

Dear James

You must be psychic. We've just been talking about our plans to give away a valuable gift with your favourite mag — according to our cash flow projection, we are on course to send out EB edition 41 with a FREE PEPPERMINT on every cover! Let the competition suck on that!

Dear Brain Man

I take issue with your review of Xenon 2 in EB 31. I played the game for all of about 10 minutes before realising that it was total * (*word omitted on instructions from HM Government censors). Just because it's been so hyped you give it 85%. Are Mindscape paying you too much? Do me a flavour!

J A Stewart
Hull

Dear J A Stewart

Shack Un Arson Goo — as they say!

Dear Brain Man

Do you know if there is a collectors' market for really ancient video games systems? For example I've got a couple of the really el primitivo football and tennis machines that first appeared in the pre-Space Invaders 1970s — one of them isn't even in colour! Given that old gramophones, wirelesses and even

early music synths now sell for a premium prices, where could I try to flog these games for more than junk shop rates?

Michael Purnell
Edinburgh

Dear Michael

My advice is to wait about another 50 years before you sell. Currently a lot of those early neanderthal games systems are readily available for the dedicated collector — but rarely being sold for more than about a tenner. Anyway, once everyone gets bored with today's megatastic all-scrolling, multi-parallax, surround-sound, state-of-the-art games, there'll be a retro craze when everyone wants to rediscover the work of those early pioneers. Why else would people today be buying all those c*** sixties and seventies glam and disco records?

Gits,

Doh! Your magazine (EB number 33) is absolutely cack! Doh!

Poolian Bignall
Bean Machines

Dear Poolian

Hold on a second, how can you say that when you can't possibly have read this issue yet? I smell a rat.

Dear Brain Man,

I would like to point out that P Bignall (letters page, EB 33) is in fact wrong when he describes EB as "cack". The correct term is in fact "great". Particularly that nice Dan fellow who writes those excellent reviews.

D Waplington,
Notts.

Dear Mr Waplington

That's much more like it! A crisp £5 note is on its way to you by fax.

KEEP THOSE LETTERS COMING!

GRADIUS II
PC ENGINE BY KONAMI
- SCD



Dan: Gradius II was always a great coin-op (though not as good as Salamander) and I hoped that one day it would be converted. Now

Konami have seen fit to actually bring it out on a console — and this is one mother of a conversion.

Visually this version is about as close as you can get on the Engine. The graphics look as though they have been directly ported from the coin-op, with the same fab sprites and brilliantly coloured backdrops. The only slight let down is the inevitable flickering sprites, but these don't prove to be too bad. Soundwise, this conversion is brilliant. The music is ported directly from the coin-op and sounds just as fab as it ever did, with the superb synths and great percussion. They've added a couple of new tracks, which are pretty groovy too. And the SFX are fine. The only element that lets this conversion down sonically is the speech samples — they're generally OK but a few are very rough.

As far as gameplay is concerned, Gradius II is pretty much like Konami's other shoot 'em ups. If you dislike their other games, this won't convert you but if, like me, you love a shoot 'em up with excellent level design, outrageous weaponry and interesting bosses, you'll enjoy this game. Lastability is a little suspect, as only the last stage is at all difficult. This fault aside, Gradius II is an excellent game — one of the best for this machine.

***THIS GAME IS KNOWN
IN THE UK AS
VULCAN VENTURE**

SCORE

Video 94%
Audio 96%
Playability 91%
Lastability 83%

91%

READERS' WIVES

Yes! At last EB gets its own Readers' Wives section. We want to hear about your video game high scores. If you think you can beat the competition, send in your details, including of course details about the game and score achieved, as well as your address, phone number, and some information about the game — eg. difficulty level played, time taken, etc. And if possible send a photo to prove that what you're saying isn't plucked from the wildest realms of wishful thinking! And no fancy paste-up jobs either.

We prefer if scores sent in relate to games played on the hardest difficulty setting with standard lives. And don't just tell us you have completed a game — tell us the score.

Certain games will be banned because of "looping" — for example, Super Shinobi on the Mega Drive. In that game it's possible to collect two extra lives on certain levels, rack up lots of points, die and then return to the same level and repeat. So anyone can get the maximum score if they persist long enough.

In future we may also organise an Electric Brain Challenge where, if you think you are the best player of a certain game, we'll get you down to challenge other players and members of the EB team — with the winner winning him/herself something absolutely terrific — or even average. And because this is Electric Brain we don't do anything by halves. Where other magazine do boringly straight challenges, we might decide to incorporate elements of the Japanese game show, Endurance. For example you'll have to sit on a football, with bare feet in a bucket of snapping turtles, eating a mouthful of chilli peppers, while playing Pitfighter on the Super Famicom!

Send all scores to Readers' Wives, Electric Brain, Space City, 77 Blythe Road, London W14 0HP.

As this is the first high score chart we've had to get the whole thing going by listing some our own EB team results. Some are dead easy to beat — so let us know!

READERS' WIVES SCORE BOARD

<u>GAME</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>PLAYER</u>
ART OF FIGHTING (Geo-Normal)	297,000	Dan The Man
Cybernator/Valken (SF)	873,090	Dan The Man
Gate Of Thunder (PC)	2,841,900	Dan The Man
Gradius III (SF-Easy)	1,600,000	P Jamndas
Jaki Crush (SF)	46,420,400	Onn Lee
Last Resort (GEO-MVS)	518,300	P Jamndas
Mercs-Arcade (MD-Normal)	1,205,800	Dan The Man
Spriggan (PC-Normal)	10,854,000	Dan The Man
Spriggan (PC-Challenge)	413,480	Onn Lee
Spriggan MK 2 (PC)	645,940	Dan The Man
Streets Of Rage 2 (MD-Hardest)	744,280	Dan The Man
Super Darius (PC-Normal)	5,635,300	Dan The Man
Super Fantasy Zone (MD-Normal)	8,342,300	Dan The Man
Super SWIV (SF)	417,455	Onn Lee
Zarlon Mercenary (Lynx)	1,051,000	Dan The Man

MEGA-LO-MANIA

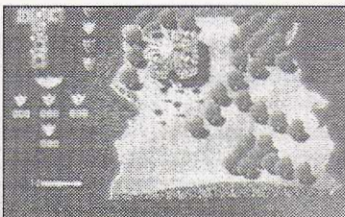
MEGA DRIVE BY VIRGIN GAMES



Onn: Mega-Lo-Mania is very much like Powermonger. Which is good news because Powermonger on the Amiga was great. After rushing out to buy it and reading the manual a few times, I got well stuck in and became very addicted to it, playing long into the night and the early morning.

Like Powermonger, Mega-Lo-Mania involves controlling an army and trying to wipe out all the computer opponents on each level. Generally the game is a lot simpler to play than Bullfrog's game.

You start each level with a castle on an island. Each section of the island has a certain amount of minerals and elements, used to invent other items. Play involves dividing up your people to perform different tasks. These include inventing weapons, setting aside an army or leaving them to populate. Later on you have to mine for minerals, build factories, etc. The game is played in real time (this can be adjust-



ed) so it takes a while to invent items — not to mention actually making them. Simple items like sticks and catapults hardly take any time to invent/make, while jet aircraft and SDI systems take ages!!

Once you have established a fair population and the necessary arms, you can recruit an army and attack the nearest opposition. If you win a battle you capture a piece of land on which you can build another castle... and so on.

The Mega Drive version of this game is extremely good indeed. Graphics and sound are very close to the computer versions, including the sampled speech. Unlike Powermonger, controlling the game with a pad is not difficult as there aren't a lot of commands or the need for totally accurate pointing. But it is tricky the first time you play.

But there are drawbacks. The game only has a few levels and so getting close to the end isn't too difficult. I never

did complete it as I kept getting to an island split in two — the only way to get across to the other side was to build a flying craft of some sort. Of course to build just one plane took ages and the plane could only hold one person!!

Mega-Lo-Mania is a fun strategy game, but a fairly simple one where the range of available tactics is fairly thin. The main strategy for winning is to start on a section of the island where there is a good supply of minerals, so you can construct weapons quickly and take out the opposition.

Despite its shortcoming, Mega-Lo-Mania is definitely worth a look. I don't consider it as playable as Powermonger; it's more suited to your average gamer — pure strategy fans will be disappointed.

SCORE

Video	80%
Audio	80%
Playability	80%
Lastability	75%

80%

POPULOUS II

SUPER FAMICOM BY IMAGINEER

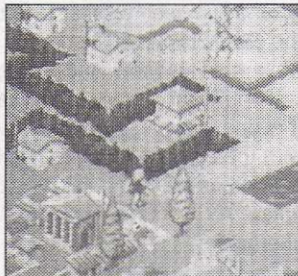


Onn: The sequel to the first real God game at last comes to the Super Famicom — and I have to say Imagineer have done quite a good conversion job. As you doubtless know, Populous II is basically an upgraded version of the original, but with more "infections" available to you to perform on your enemy! These range from simple lightning bolts that can take out anything on a single square to earthquakes, volcanoes, swamps, whirlpools, plagues, an assortment of Gods and Goddesses and full scale tidal waves that can wipe out large sections of land!

As you might expect, playing the game with a joystick is fairly tricky. But unlike the ridiculous arrangement used for Powermonger on the MD, control with the pad is made easier because you only need to use two buttons (to either raise or lower land) and generally only one button is used — plus another to change from map and the two sets of icon commands. Simple and effective!

Graphically, excellent — particularly the Greek Gods. Apart from the better look of full screen, which really improves things, the game is almost identical to the Amiga version. Sound is also the same as the Amiga version, with suitably atmospheric "tunes" and great sound effects, realistic fires, storms, bubbling swamps and lava, etc.

There are a few bad programming errors however. Sometimes when you raise a piece of land at the edge of the viewable screen and somebody builds a house on it, you cannot lower it unless you move it to the centre of the screen. Again when there are lots of men (and women) on the screen the game slows down. Worse still (although it doesn't affect the game play),



when you click on Armageddon, the amount of sprites on the screen is too much for the system to handle — whole rows of sprites disappear!

Populous II is a great sequel to the original, extremely playable and fairly addictive. Even if you have the original game the sequel is definitely worth buying. Unless of course you have the Amiga version, which is no better or worse, but ever so slightly more playable because it uses the mouse — this is not the case if you happen to have the SF mouse of course!

The review game I played was the Japanese version, with a Japanese password system — so drawing squiggly lines is the order of the day if you wish to get far!

SCORE

Video	90%
Audio	85%
Playability	95%
Lastability	88%

95%

ASPARAGUS TIPS

3 IN 1 DISK

(Turbo Duo)

Amazingly, the 3 in 1 disk is actually 4 in 1, as it also includes Bomberman! So it's a bit of a bummer if you went out and bought Bomberman too!! To get Bomberman: on the title, with Bonk next to Gate of Thunder, press UP, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT, BUTTON II. You'll hear a ring and you will then get the game.

ASSAULT SUIT VALKEN

(CYBERNATOR)

(Super Famicom)

OK, if you are finding this game a bit hard and want infinite continues to have a crack at the later levels: on the title screen, press UP, L, R, and press START. Now, when you lose your assault suit, you will be on FREE PLAY to continue all you like.

CHUCK ROCK

(Game Gear)

Here are the codes for GG version of Chuck Rock:

Round 2: 7G09M, Round 3: NN6E3, Round 4: 84AKC.

FACEBALL 2000

(Super Famicom)

To change options on this game, on the Cyberzone mode, hold L and R and then press START. Let go of L and R, and the GAME SET UP screen will appear. Now you can alter lives, speed, etc.

FATAL FURY

(Super Famicom)

We were going to print this in the last issue, but as we hadn't actually reviewed it... we didn't! Anyway, to play the bosses in a two player game: first choose a normal fighter as player one (rather bad both players can't be bosses!), then when player two chooses, press DOWN on pad 2 and you can choose the other guys.

As each of these guys have special moves, you can figure them out yourself, although most are based on the same combinations of the three original fighters — ie. charge back, then forward and press Y, or DOWN then UP and press Y, or rotate from bottom to top diagonal and press Y. If you can't figure them all out, we'll print them in the next issue... although it has to be said, the game's not exactly brilliant even when playing these characters!!

HUMAN GRAND PRIX

(Super Famicom)

If you find that after qualifying you are down on the grid, on the STARTING GRID screen, press SELECT and button B — and you will move into pole position!

IMAGE FIGHT II

(PC Engine - SCD)

Should you complete Stage 10, you can go to the option screen, where there will be an Omake option. Enter VISUAL TEST and you will be able to change your ship from the normal Image Fighter to the R9 from R-Type or a little guy on a cloud called Gensan!

If you are playing with a lack of weapons, pause and press RIGHT, I, DOWN, I, LEFT, I — and you should have three orange pods.

Alternatively, pause and press LEFT, II, UP, II, RIGHT, II for forward and backward firing missiles.

JAMES BOND JR.

(Super Famicom)

If you are sad enough to buy this game, here are the passwords:

Level 2: 0007, Level 3: 3675, Level 4: 9025 and Level 5: 1813

LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE

(Mega Drive)

If you enter MANSELL on the password, then you will qualify every time!

And if you think it's a bit on the slow side, stick in SLUGPACE for infinite Turbos.

RANMA 1/2 PART 2

(Super Famicom)

If you wish to play against the same character as yourself against the computer... on the PLAYER SELECT screen, pick PLAYER while holding the L and R buttons.

If you want to pick the bosses to play in the one player game, on the title screen with the one player game highlighted, press UP, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT, UP, X, SELECT and START — and you'll be able to pick all characters!

To see the graphic screens, etc. without having to play through the game, again on TITLE, press SELECT, X, UP, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT, UP — and you will get an extra option.

SNOW BROS

(Gameboy)

To select stages: on the title screen, hold DOWN, UP, SELECT and B, then press START.

SONIC 2

(Mega Drive)

After the level select, Super Sonic, and wacky cheat, how about a few more continues in this game? On the sound test, play the following tunes 01, 01, 02, 04. then start the game. When it's game over, you'll have 14p of them!

STREETS OF RAGE II

(Mega Drive)

Here's a cheat for this excellent beat 'em up. Plug in two controllers and, on the main menu, hold down both A and B buttons on the second controller and select OPTIONS with controller one. On the option screen, you can now select the ever so difficult MANIA mode, plus up to 9 players and a round select too! Of course, if you completed the game in HARDEST mode, you would have known all this!

TETRIS 2 + BOMBLISS

(Super Famicom)

On Tetris 2, if you think you are superb at this game, try starting from stage SP9. To get to this level, select TETRIS 2, TYPE A and move to level 20. Then on pad 2, press L, R and SELECT and you can then move to SP9.

On Bombliss, you can only start from stage 3, which is very annoying. But doing the same as on Tetris 2 will enable you to move all the way to stage 60.

T M N T - RETURN OF THE

SHREDDER

(Mega Drive)

For STAGE SELECT and AREA SELECT, do the following: on the Konami logo screen, press buttons C, B, B, A, A, A, B, C. Next, on the title screen, press the following: A, B, B, C, C, C, B, A. Then start the game... and hey presto!

Well, we've come to the end of the page, so just a word to you all... if you have some out and out tips to share, send them to: Asparagus Tips, Electric Brain, Space City, 77 Blythe Road, London W14 0HP. If your tip gets printed, a crisp £5 note will be sent to you — don't spend it all at once!

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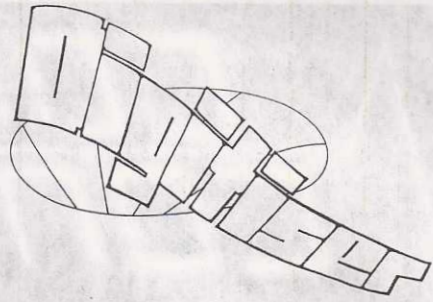
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